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NICARAGUA AND ITS RAILWAY.

To carry a railroad or to open a canal across that portion of Central America which is known as Nicaragua, are projects which have long been in abeyance. Their discussion have even had an influence upon the political history of the country. When, on the separation of the Central American provinces from Spain, the royalists associated themselves in a revolutionary movement which they were unable to resist, they did so in the secret hope of establishing a Central American monarchy. Their political opponents, on the other side, aimed at a republican confederacy, after the model of the North American Union. The latter succeeded. The royalists, unwilling to submit, asked the assistance of the ephemeral Mexican emperor, Iturbide; and when, in consequence of this application, a Mexican army entered Guatamala, the fugitive republican congress decreed the annexation of Central America to the United States. The shortness of Iturbide's career relieved the country from the necessity of choosing between the two annexations, either to the then existing empire of Mexico or to the North American Union. But that decree of annexation to the United States decided the character of the interference of foreign powers in the domestic affairs of Central America; and all the subsequent phases of political dissension and civil war in that unfortunate country, down to William Walker, who was called in by the remnants of the same party which, in 1822, decreed the annexation to the United States, take their origin from that desperate position of parties in the first year of independence. From that date it was decided that thenceforth Central America should be a prey to foreign influences—that the royalists or aristocrats, called "serviles," had to look to England; the republicans or democrats, called "liberales," to the United States, for sympathy and support in their struggle for power, and the realisation of their political system. From that time also, throughout Central America, the former might be called the English, the latter the American party; and as the latter were those who established, supported, defended, and, after its having been overturned, strove to restore the federal constitution and government, British influence in Central America, as a matter of course, directed itself against all federal tendencies and to preserve the *status quo*.

It is not a little singular that, at the epoch of the first conquest of Central America by the Spaniards, the country was found to be, as it is in the present day, divided among populations who, it is well known, had attained to a remarkable degree of civilisation—their monuments still studding the land—but separated from one another by idioms, and dialects, and by political tendencies. The attempt at a federation of the

States of Central America met with a similar result, and a French traveller, well acquainted with the country, Monsieur Henri de Suckau, although strongly opposed to English influence, admits that the tendencies, absolutely opposed, of the populations of the States of Central America render a federal union difficult, and almost chimerical; he believes that they have found the form of government which suits them best; and that which proves it, he says, is that, for nigh twenty years, the most perfect peace has been maintained, and favours the development of commerce and industry.* We have thus presented to us pretty nearly the same state of things as existed at the time of the conquest. One of the finest countries in the world—among the richest in mineral resources, and the most productive in precious woods and in useful and medicinal plants—divided into petty states, independent of, and often inimical to, one another. According to Henri de Suckau, the idioms even differ already in the different towns.

Various attempts have since been made to reconstruct the union dissolved in 1837, more especially by Nicaragua, Salvador, and Honduras in 1844, 1846, and 1847, without leading to any result; until, in 1849, the influence of the United States was brought to bear upon the question. Encouraged by the government of Washington, the State of Nicaragua took the lead in a new attempt. Guatamala and Costa Rica held aloof, but the representatives of the other three States assembled at Leon, drew up a federal constitution, and elected a president of the new confederation.

To frustrate the success of these labours has been one of the principal motives by which foreign influences were actuated in promoting the revolutionary outbreak of 1851 in Nicaragua. To frustrate the endeavours of the Accessory Transit Company, an offset, or rather a metamorphosis of the Atlantic and Pacific Ship Canal Company of New York, was another motive of almost equal weight with the same foreign influence. Both motives, by the peculiar turn which things had taken in Nicaragua, came into conflict with each other; the federalists of Leon being precisely that of the two Nicaraguan parties which was opposed to the new contract demanded by the Accessory Transit Company. The government of President Taylor had also, in the mean time, given place to that of President Fillmore, and with the change of administration came also a change of policy in reference to Central American affairs. Hence it came to pass that, on this occasion, England and the United States took the same view of the question, both concurring in not taking any notice of the existence of the new Central American Confederation, though it had been formed under the influence of the latter of the two powers.

In this hopeless state of affairs the interference of the Canal Company marked a new period in the history of Central American troubles and dissensions. Munoz and the federal party at Leon were opposed to extending the immense monopolies and privileges, including those of the sole navigation of the lakes, to a company which merely proposed to open a carriage-road across the Isthmus of Rivas, whilst the anti-federal and aristocratic party, whose head-quarters were at Granada, were inclined to grant the concession. A revolution breaking out in 1851 at

* Une Voie nouvelle à travers l'Amérique Centrale, p. 16.

Leon, the Americans induced the Granada party to elect a government of its own, which, in return for the support given to it, granted the contract demanded by the Accessory Transit Company. The government of Leon protested, however, against the cession, taking the unobjectionable ground that, if during a civil war a foreigner enters into an agreement with one of the parties, he makes his rights and claims dependent upon the fate of the party on which he thinks proper to rely. Hence it was that, notwithstanding the temporary successes of Chamorro, and the failure of the second revolt of the Leonese in 1854 under Munoz and Castellon, when the aid of Walker and his followers was cast into the scale, the anti-federals triumphed over their antagonists, but without the objects proposed to themselves by the Accessory Transit Company ever having been permanently carried out.

The majority of the Nicaraguans have ever entertained a correct conviction that their country, and Central America in general, can only be redeemed by the aid of foreign elements of population from Europe and North America. Froëbel attributes the circumstance of the democratic party having sought foreign assistance at any cost to the fact that, seeing and understanding the degree of prosperity, progress, wealth, and power derived by the United States from foreign emigration, they also fully understood that, with all its natural wealth and advantages of situation, Central America has no other hope of escape from ruin than the acquisition of skill, intelligence, activity, enterprise, and capital from the same source.* It is to this feeling that is to be attributed the liberal concessions made to the Nicaragua Railway Company, more especially of ten acres of freehold land to the first fifty thousand shares of ten pounds each—a boon which, it is to be hoped, will not be lost to the country by any new pronunciamentos or revolutions which may arise to annul the existing contract.

M. Felix Belly, a French gentleman, who improved upon the project of a Nicaraguan canal, entertained as far back as 1846 by the present French emperor, also obtained a convention from the presidents of the republics of Nicaragua and of Costa Rica, in accordance with which he, Monsieur Belly, was to cut a canal or water-route for ships through the territories of those potentates, obtaining thereby certain vast privileges, including the possession of no small portion of these territories, and the right of levying all manner of tolls on the world's commerce which was to pass through his canal. And the potentates above named were in return to receive from M. Belly very considerable subsidies out of these tolls.

"What strikes me," remarks Mr. Anthony Trollope, "with the greatest wonder on reading—not the pamphlet, for that is perhaps more wonderful in other respects, but the articles of the convention—is that these three persons, the potentates aforesaid and the chevalier, should have among them the power of doing all this, or that they should even have had the power of agreeing to do all this; for really up to this period one seems hardly to have heard in England much about any one of them.

"That there should be presidents of these two republics is supposed, as there are also doubtless of San Salvador and Venezuela, and all the

* Seven Years' Travel in Central America, p. 158.

other western republics; but it is to be presumed that as presidents of republics they can have themselves no more power to give away a ninety-nine years' possession of their lands and waters than can any other citizen. The President of the United States could hardly sell to any Englishman, however enterprising, the right of making a railway from New York to San Francisco. The convention does certainly bear two other signatures, which purport to be those of the ministers of foreign affairs attached to those two republics; but even this hardly seems to give us a sufficient guarantee of power. What if we should put our money into the canal, and future presidents should refuse to be bound by the agreement?"*

The same pertinent, or impertinent question, according to the light in which it may be viewed, might perchance be put in the case of the concession granted to Captain Bedford Pim or to the Nicaragua Railway Company, but this, as we shall afterwards explain at length, is not the case, and the concessions granted have been ratified and confirmed by congress.

Whilst quoting Mr. Trollope, we observe that he further remarks, in connexion with the various lines of transport across Central America, advocated by different parties, that, as regards railway passage, one line being now open and at work, has those nine points in its favour which possession gives. It does convey men and goods across with great rapidity, and is a reality, doing that which it pretends to do. Its charges, he admits, however, are very high; and it would doubtless be well if competition, or fear of competition, could be made to lower them. Five pounds are charged for conveying a passenger less than fifty miles; no class of passengers can cross at a cheaper fare; and the rates charged for goods are as high in comparison. On the other side, it may be said that the project was one of great risk, that the line was from its circumstances very costly, having been made at an expense of about thirty-two thousand pounds a mile, and that trains by which money can be made cannot run often—perhaps only six or seven times a month each way.

Admitting, as Mr. Trollope himself does, that British diplomacy can have no further interest in Central America than that of making the public world-roads which that country so peculiarly presents, available to all nations, and that such is the sole and only meaning of all those treaties made on our behalf with Central America, or in respect to Central America—Clayton-Bulwer treaty, new Ouseley treaty, and others—it may be replied to the above, that not only does competition render other lines of transit desirable, but some such would present great advantages to the regions through which they would pass, as well to travellers bound to distant countries.

This is the case especially with the Nicaragua Railway, and it would also be the case with the Honduras Railway. It appears from the accounts given by Mr. Squiers† that we have on the latter line a kind of breach in the Cordilleras, which constitutes an opening as if especially designed for a railroad. Two rivers take their departure from this breach in opposite directions, one for the Bay of Honduras, the other for the Bay

* The West Indies and the Spanish Main, p. 346. By Anthony Trollope.

† Notes on Central America; particularly the States of Honduras and San Salvador, &c. By E. G. Squiers.

of Fonseca. These two streams flow each along a wide valley, and these two valleys meeting at their heads constitute in reality only one. The most populous and prosperous towns of Honduras and Salvador are scattered along or near to this pass. Comaygua, the capital of Honduras, stands at about a central point. Tegucigalpa, the most populous city, Choluteca and San Miguel, provincial capitals, are close by, and numerous large and small towns also lie around, indebted for their existence chiefly to the well-known mineral wealth of the country. Honduras surpasses in this respect, as also in the abundance of its precious woods, all other of the States of Central America. This mineral wealth, it is to be observed, is chiefly confined to that system, or cluster of mountains, which constitutes what may be called the plateau of Honduras. Neuva Segovia and Chontales, the mineral district of Nicaragua, also belong to this mountain system, and the same holds good with respect to the mineral district of San Miguel in Salvador, and which embraces the only mines in that State. It is evident, then, that the Honduras Railway would present, like that of Nicaragua, advantages of a local character, and that it would do much towards opening Honduras and Salvador to commerce and civilisation. Objections have been started against the road having to ascend nearly three thousand feet above the sea-level, but over such an extent of country the grades would not be found more severe than many that are now to be found on railways in full work in other countries. If the Americans had the same interests in the Pacific that we have, this line would have long ago been constructed, for its position is more favourable to traffic with the United States than any other. In the mean time, we are not a little amused by M. Henri de Suckau, another Belly and Lesseps in regard to magnificence of conception and magniloquence of expression, asserting that "it would be grand, it is indeed necessary, that France, which is found at the head of all ideas of progress, should here take the initiative and give the example."

The fact is that, notwithstanding the gloomy anticipations of some, who cannot conceive how rival lines, if costing much, and being compelled at the same time by that very rivalry to run at low rates, can pay, Central America will in the course of time be traversed by many lines, most of which will be found self-supporting. The Panama line is a mere line of transit. It would not be so with a line, if feasible, across the Mexican provinces of Vera Cruz, Tabasco, and Oaxaca, nor with a line across Honduras, nor with a line across Nicaragua. All these would open new countries well populated, and of vast resources to commerce and civilisation, at the same time that they would present favourable competitive lines of transit to other parts of the world.

A considerable passenger traffic has now existed for some years past through Central America by the route of the Lake of Nicaragua. This, of course, has been in the hands of the Americans, and the passengers are chiefly those going and coming between the Eastern States and California. They came down to Greytown, at the mouth of the San Juan River, in steamers from New York, and other American ports, went up the San Juan River in other steamers, with flat bottoms prepared for those waters, across the lake in the same way, and then by a good road over the Isthmus of Rivas, the intervening neck of land between the lake and the Pacific.

The construction of the Panama Railway, the company, possessing the line of steamers which run from New York to Aspinwall, having been able to buy off the line which ran to Greytown, materially affected, but was not the sole cause of the stoppage of this Nicaraguan route. The filibusters came into the land and destroyed everything. They dropped down from California on Realejo, Leon, Managua, Granada, and all the western coast of Nicaragua. Then others came from the South-Eastern States, from Mobile and New Orleans, and swarmed up the San Juan River, devouring everything before them. There can be no doubt that Walker's idea, in his attempt to possess himself of the country, was that he could thus become master of the passage across the isthmus. Traders were beginning to establish themselves along the route, men prepared to provide travellers with food and drink, and the boats with fuel for their steam. The filibusters put an end to all this. All along the banks of the river tales are told of their injustice and sufferings: how recklessly they robbed on their journey up the country, and how they returned back to Greytown—those who did return, whose bones are not whitening the lake shores—wounded, maimed, and miserable.

Greytown is an old Spanish settlement, known formerly as San Juan del Norte, or San Juan de Nicaragua, and it was before the independence of Central America one of the official ports of entry for the Spanish dominions in this part of the world. The more recent history of the place, since it has acquired some importance in American politics, is not without interest, intimately connected as it is with the question of the Mosquito protectorate, with the contended stipulations of the Clayton-Bulwer treaty, with the disputed territorial rights of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, with the claims of the different transit companies, and with the adventurous expeditions of the modern filibusters. For some time the town was governed by a British consul in the name of the King of Mosquitia, but in 1857 the inhabitants, with the consent of England, declared their community to form a free city under a constitution of their own. In 1854, this then free town, after having considerably increased, was, on account of some quarrel that arose between the inhabitants and the Accessory Transit Company, totally destroyed, so that a few houses only remained.

Greytown, which has risen on the ashes of San Juan del Norte, is situated at the mouth of the northern branch of the river, by which the basin of the Lake of Nicaragua is connected with the ocean. The situation is incomparably better and healthier than that of Chagres. The soil is sandy, and, with the sea on one side, the river on the other, and a lagoon on the third, is dry on the surface, but impregnated with water below. A considerable proportion of the inhabitants are coloured people from the interior as well as from the West Indies, but the better class is almost entirely composed of foreigners—Americans, English, Frenchmen, Spaniards, Germans, and Italians, representing a type of what the population of Central America will no doubt in due course become—a mixture of all the elements able to contribute to the development of civilisation and prosperity in this beautiful and interesting region.

Mr. Anthony Trollope does not, however, give a flattering account of the place. "Of all the places in which I have ever put my foot," he says, "I think that is the most wretched. It is a small town, perhaps of two thousand inhabitants, though this, on my part, is a mere guess, at

the mouth of the San Juan, and surrounded on every side either by water or impassable forests. A walk of a mile in any direction would be impossible, unless along the beach of the sea; but this is of less importance, as the continual heat would prevent any one from thinking of such exercise. Sundry Americans live here, worshipping the almighty dollar as Americans do, keeping liquor-shops and warehouses; and with the Americans sundry Englishmen and sundry Germans. Of the female population I saw nothing except some negro women, and one white, or rather red-faced owner of a rum-shop. The native population are the Mosquito Indians; but it seems that they are hardly allowed to live in Greytown. They are to be seen paddling about in their canoes, selling a few eggs and chickens, catching turtle, and not rarely getting drunk. They would seem, from their colour and physiognomy, to be a cross between the negro and the Indian, and such I imagine to be the case. They have a language of their own, but those on the coast almost always speak English too."

A trip up the River San Juan is, in reference to the beauties of nature, one of the most interesting that can be made. Near the mouth, as far up as the higher end of its delta, the banks are almost on the water's level, overgrown with reeds, mangroves, and a low species of palm-tree, the latter forming extensive thickets in the swamps. After a distance of fourteen or fifteen miles the land gradually becomes a little higher, and steep embankments of a brown or reddish clay rise to some ten or twenty feet above the water. The low palm thickets of the swampy region disappear, and a vegetation of splendid trees, overhung with creepers, takes their place. Flowery garlands swing from branch to branch, hanging over the stream, while now and then the slender shafts of one of the tallest species of the palm tribe wafts its little crown of feathery leaves high over the gorgeous masses of the heavier foliage.

Eight or ten miles higher up, the region of the "randales," or rapids, begins. Here the river, locked in between wooded hills, presents a new character of scenery. The trees, covering the hill-sides with an almost impenetrable forest, exhibit an extraordinary variety of forms. At a point where the river foams over a bed of rocks stands the old castle of San Juan, better known as Castillo Viejo. Since 1780 it has remained a ruin, though Nicaragua always keeps a few soldiers here, occupying a shed at the foot of the hill on which the remains of the fort are to be seen. In the civil wars of a few years past this place was repeatedly occupied and evacuated by the contending powers. In 1854 the Leonese party held it with a small force, when the Granadinos under Chamorro took it, and spared the lives of none of the adversaries who fell into their hands.

The rapids on this portion of the river, known as the Machuco, Castillo, and Toro rapids, constitute the only real impediments to navigation. Boats can pass down them, but not upwards. In the time of steamboats one set proceeded upwards to this point, while another set carried on communication with the lake.

The main features of the orography of Nicaragua, it is to be observed, were little known until the publication of Squiers's and Froëbel's works. It appears from the explorations of these competent observers that three lines of mountains, or hills, pass through the country parallel to each other, and that they are not connected by transverse ridges. The main

ridge of the country, which constitutes the rapids of the San Juan River, takes a general north-westerly course as far as the department of Choluteca, in Honduras. All this way it leaves the low region of the Nicaraguan lakes to the west, and the table-land of Mosquitia, Matogalpa, and New Segovia to the north-east. This ridge, strictly speaking, is more the edge of a table-land than a central chain of mountains. A second range of hills runs along the Pacific coast. It has occasional depressions, and at several places is entirely interrupted. The first depression is between the Rio Sapoa and the Bay of Salinas, the second between Virgin's Bay on Lake Nicaragua and San Juan del Sur on the Pacific—the line of American transit. The third is between the Lake of Managua, near Nagorote, and the little bay of Tamarinda. South of Leon, it is interrupted by the little river which passes from the plain around the capital to the sea-coast; and sixthly and lastly, around the port of Realejo—the line of the Nicaraguan Railway—the broad plain of the interior is entirely open towards the Pacific. North-west of Realejo, however, the hills of the coast begin again, the range becoming higher and higher, till at the entrance of the Gulf of Fonseca, the terminus of the projected Honduras Railway, it ends abruptly with the famous volcano of Coseguina.

Between these two lines of elevations there is, further, a third one, which consists not of a continuous range, but of a series of isolated volcanic cones and hills, placed as it were upon a central line of igneous energy. Beginning in the south-east, the first of these detached elevations is the island Solentenami, in the Lake of Nicaragua. Then come the two cones of the island of Omotepe, the island of Zapotera, the Mombacho over Granada, the volcano of Masaya, the hills of the peninsula between Managua and Mateares, which drive the railway to the westward, the island Momotombito in the lake of Managua, the Momotombo, the highest peak in the lot, reaching an altitude of seven thousand feet, the Axosco, the Pilas, the Orota, the Felica, the Santa Clara, and the Viego, all of which, with some smaller cones on the same line, are known by the general name of the Maribios; and lastly, the islands of Tigre and Sacate Grande, in the Gulf of Fonseca, which may be considered as a north-westerly continuation of the series. Between these three lines of elevations the traveller can pass on a level road from the Atlantic to the Pacific; and in the direction of the latter this may be done by two principal routes—one on the south-western side of the Maribios, from Leon to Realejo, that selected for the proposed line of railway, and the other on the north-eastern side of the Maribios, from the northern corner of the Lake of Managua through the plain of the Rio de Palma and the Estero Real to the Gulf of Fonseca.

To return to the region of the rapids, above these the river is almost stagnant, and the designation of "aguas muertas," or dead waters, is not inappropriately applied to it. It is a deep and still water, with low and swampy banks, on which the palm thickets of the delta reappear. The waters are full of fish, on which ferocious crocodiles—not alligators, but the true *Crocodili Americani*—feed.

Beyond this latter portion of the river the Lake of Nicaragua opens to the view. On the little promontory formed by the lake and the inlet of

the river the custom-house, designated as Fort San Carlos, has been established. There are a few houses at the place, and a small military force is kept up to protect the establishment, and, in case of necessity, enforce the payment of the duties. The ruins of an old Spanish castle also still exist here, but they are hidden among the trees and shrubs with which they are overgrown.

The view at this point has a peculiar character of grandeur. At the foot of the hill a broad sheet of water is spread, studded in the immediate neighbourhood with small green islands, and extending, in a north-westerly direction, as far as the eye can reach. To the left, a low wooded shore begins at the outlet of the lake, and continues in that direction till it is lost in the distance of the western horizon. A chain of high mountains, cast in a shroud of dark forests, rises in its rear, covering an unknown region of Costa Rica. It comprises several active volcanoes, which on late occasions, as in 1854, have illumined the surface of the lake by their flames and red-hot streams of lava. To the right, the view does not extend beyond the nearest hills; but, at a short distance on the lake, it ranges over a long line of broken eminences, with the mountain-chain of Chontales in their rear, bordering like a wall the table-land of Upper Mosquitia. Hill and dale, forests and savanas, appear in endless variety in this direction. On the distant horizon in the centre of the view the two cones of the island of Ometepe are seen faintly traced, and as their forms are lifted up by refraction they seem to swim over the water.

Close by the very spot where the San Juan River leaves the lake, the Rio Frio enters it. This is a river coming down from the mountains of Costa Rica, and which traverses dense forests inhabited by a warlike tribe of Indians, who refuse to have intercourse with the rest of the world. The officer in command at San Carlos once fitted out an expedition for the purpose of obtaining some of the gold for which the river is famous. This little corps was suddenly assailed by a shower of arrows, and every man was killed with the exception of the officer, who succeeded in hiding himself among the reeds. Froëbel relates a story of a young German who, when at San Carlos, on his way to California, had a quarrel with his travelling companions, and being afraid of a pistol-ball or a bowie-knife, took the desperate resolution of swimming to the opposite side of the river, where he soon fell into the hands of a body of these Indians. He was tied to a tree, and they held a council as to the manner—so at least he believed—of putting him to death. Suddenly, however, as it has happened before in similar cases, a young girl, the daughter of the chief, hurried forth, clasped her arms round the neck of the blue-eyed Teuton, and gave a favourable turn to his fate. Of course he married the girl, and, as the consort of this Indian princess, he spent some months in the forest, till he was ungrateful enough to forsake his generous bride and avail himself of an opportunity to swim back to San Carlos. According to his statements, he would have remained with the Indians had he been able to endure the privations of life in the wilderness. During the rainy season the tribe lived almost exclusively on the trees; and he spoke in very high terms of the dexterity with which they would leap from branch to branch, a mode of travelling in which he often found it too difficult to

follow his nimble spouse. We have here a curious instance of adaptation in the habits of a tribe of savages, as also a "rapprochement" to the habits of our supposed progenitors, according to some theorists.

The line of the River San Juan is not, however, that by which it is proposed to reach the lake by the Nicaragua Railway Company. Greytown harbour was in its best days a mere reclamation from the Caribbean Sea—an alluvial growth into the ocean—and as this growth could not but under the laws of nature continue, the harbour was doomed to become a lagoon, and the water of the river to find some other outlet. To such an extent has this been carried, that grass is now growing where Hollins's fleet anchored when Greytown was bombarded; and the Central American Transit Company, which succeeded to the Accessory Transit Company, has been obliged to give up that mouth of the San Juan altogether, and take to that called the Rio Colorado, which lies at a distance of eighteen miles to the south. The system adopted by the last-mentioned American company, until it was silted out, was that of stern-wheel light-draught steamers from Greytown up the River San Juan to the Lake of Nicaragua, side-wheelers to cross the lake, and waggons on the intervening twelve or fifteen miles of land between the lake and the Pacific. As late as March, 1865, fifteen hundred passengers crossed by this route, but mostly in canoes, bongoes, or any sort of craft that came to hand. The personal hardships to be endured in such a rude transit were willingly put up with, from confidence in the salubrity of the climate. No one of this large number is said to have suffered from fever.

When the harbour of Greytown became closed by silt, Captain Bedford Pim, who in 1859-60 was senior naval officer there, and whose work—"The Gate of the Pacific"—is deservedly well known, was fortunate enough to discover a neglected and imperfectly known bay, since named after its discoverer "Pim's Bay," enclosed within Monkey Point, on the Mosquito coast, about thirty miles north of Greytown. The bay presents a depth varying from four to three fathoms, and the bottom is clean throughout, gradually shelving towards the shore. The whole coast is thickly wooded, as are also the numerous "cays" or islands off it. There are several small streams of good water, but no inhabitants nearer than the Rama River. The Indians of the Rama tribe are described by Bard in his curious little book* as very docile, and as speaking Spanish. They visit Bluefields, where they sell dories and pitpans-boats, hewn out of a single block of wood. The bay, which has an inside area of over five thousand acres, opens to the south, and, even at present, offers perfect immunity from the north winds, so much dreaded on this coast. It has been said that in all such matters where a man becomes warm on a scheme he feels himself compelled to prove that the gods themselves have pointed out the plan as the only one fit for adoption—as the only one free from all evil, and blessed with every advantage. We are always over-proving our points. With this caution in view, it is still impossible not to agree with Mr. John Collinson, the engineer to the company, when he says "the bay seems to have been designed by nature for the required terminus." To make assurance, however, doubly sure, it is proposed to

* Waikna; or, Adventures on the Mosquito Shore, p. 76. By Samuel A. Bard.

carry out a breakwater from Monkey Point, not far from the proposed settlement, to Palmetto and Little Cay (on the latter of which is to be a lighthouse), when we are told "the surface of the entire bay will be unruffled at all times." Good stone abounds in the immediate vicinity, and could, after quarrying, be tipped in over the proposed site for the breakwater, allowing it to assume its own slope for a distance of eleven hundred yards.

Captain Bedford Pim made his first journey into the interior in 1860, but it was not at that time considered expedient, politically, to encourage his scheme. Nothing daunted, he returned in March, 1863, accompanied by a staff of civil engineers, to make a scientific examination of the country. A road was cut through the dense primeval forests, fully confirming the entire practicability of the projected route; but Nicaragua being at war with San Salvador, the necessary concession could not be obtained from the government. This was not, indeed, secured until February, 1864, when a bill was passed through both chambers, and approved by the government; but finding, on his return to England, that the concession must be improved before a company could be formed, he undertook a further journey in 1864-5, when he was accompanied by an engineer of ability and a well-known artist. A new road was cut into the forest on this occasion, and a new bill was passed through congress, greatly improving the original concession.

The term of the modified concession is ninety-nine years. One-and-a-third millions of acres of land are ceded gratuitously, all of which land is situated in the three rich mineral districts of Chontales, Matagalpa, and Segovia—nearly half a million acres in each. Besides this, there are extensive land grants on each side of the line in alternate squares, one for the government, the next for the railroad company, and so on all through the greater part of the line. Both terminal ports are to be free ports, but it is especially stipulated that the government shall have no sort of control over the working and management of the transit.

An examination of the gold and silver district of Chontales proved its immense value beyond dispute, and it is even said that a broad strong vein of gold runs right across the proposed line of route. Large groves of india-rubber trees, and an abundance of cedar and mahogany, besides other valuable products, were found to abound over the entire line. The scenery of Nicaragua is, indeed, admittedly most beautiful, and, taking it all in all, perhaps unrivalled in the world. The Atlantic coast-line is, for the most part, low, and fringed with primeval forests; magnificent rivers, rising in the far interior, empty themselves into the Caribbean Sea, their mouths intersected by extensive lagoons, forming an interior navigation unrivalled in any part of the world. Inland, towering mountains and volcanoes, extensive savanas, level plains and beautiful lakes, dotted with the most romantic islands, meet the view on every side.

The natural productions of this beautiful country are, perhaps, more varied and useful than in any other part of the globe of like extent. They comprise precious metals and stones, cochineal, indigo, sarsaparilla, vanilla, india-rubber, balsams, copal, cotton, cocoa, coffee, tobacco, hides, mahogany, cedar, oak, dye-woods, pitch pine, lignum vitæ, a great variety of hard woods, silk grass, tortoiseshell, and others. Some of these productions cannot be surpassed in quality. Indigo, for example, has long

been accounted the best of any; cocoa was and still is unequalled—at the time of the Spaniards it was reserved for the king's use; the coffee is excellent, the same as Costa Rica; and cotton, when formerly exported, was superior even to the New Orleans varieties.

It is proposed to carry the first thirteen miles of railway from Monkey Point along the hard level beach, making a long sweep in its course round the bay to the mouth of the Rama River. The next twelve miles keep along the north bank of the latter river, which is navigable that distance, to the point selected for crossing the stream by an iron-girder bridge of a hundred feet span. The line of railway would then be continued to a point a little south of San Miguelito on Lake Nicaragua, a farther distance of fifty-five miles. On arriving here, if deemed desirable, a perfect communication between the two oceans could be opened by means of the Central American Transit Company's route from Virgin's Bay on the lake to San Juan del Sur on the Pacific.

The American company has already an excellent wharf twelve hundred and eighty feet long, and constructed of durable material, at Virgin's Bay, and is about to construct an iron pile wharf at San Juan del Sur. We further observe, from a letter of Mr. Francis Morris, president of the Central American Transit Company, to the stockholders, that it is proposed, should the Nicaraguan line, as above described, be carried out, to construct a branch railroad from the rapids of Toro to that line. These are the last on the ascent of the river, and a distance of only twenty-five miles from Lake Nicaragua, while San Miguelito is about eighteen miles north of Fort San Carlos, where the river leaves the lake. A junction between the rapids and the Nicaraguan Railway would then facilitate the conveyance of passengers from Pim's Bay to that portion of the river beyond which the navigation is unobstructed, but we cannot see if the importance of Pim's Bay is thus admitted, as also of the first portion of the proposed line of railway, what advantage would be gained by retroceding to the navigable portion of the river rather than going on direct to San Miguelito on the lake. It would open a greater extent of country, and that is always an advantage, especially where every additional clearance tends to improve the salubrity of the climate, but few passengers once on the route to the lake would stop on their way merely to join the American transit line on the navigable part of the river. For the American company to negotiate, as is also proposed, with the government of Nicaragua for the right of constructing a direct road from Monkey Point to the rapids of Toro, would scarcely improve their position, as it would institute a competition which might prove ruinous to both parties—certainly to the American line, which is the longest, and would thus be also injurious to the Nicaraguan government. It would be best to devote their funds and energies to the completion of a railroad from Virgin's Bay to San Juan del Sur, of which they have the concession, and which presents all the advantages of being the most direct transit route beyond the lake.

But the Nicaragua Railway Company do not limit themselves to a mere transit route, and this is one of the points upon which it appears to us to found its strongest claims to support; it opens a local traffic, passes on to the great centres of population, produce, and industry in the country, and thus presents the twofold advantages of being a transit line,

and of opening new realms to commerce and civilisation—in fact, of being one day a self-supporting line. The well-known hydrographer Maury, in a letter to Captain Bedford Pim,* intimates that the American, Atlantic, and Pacific Ship Canal Company abandoned their project because there was not water enough in the lakes of Nicaragua to float such ships as the canal was intended to pass; but this says nothing against the navigation of the lakes by such steam-boats as would be necessary for traffic between the two or three termini of the railway. It is well known that there is ample depth of water in Lake Nicaragua for ordinary transport, and that the navigation is easy and safe. Steam-boats have, in fact, plied upon its waters. Froëbel navigated this splendid sheet of water in a bongo, or native boat. By the time he had left the two remarkable peaks of the island of Ometepe on one side, the summit of the Mombacho, designating the site of Granada, gradually rose from the water. Beyond was the island of Zapotera, covered with forest, here and there interrupted by a patch of savana, and where Mr. Squiers discovered many curious idols. Like other of the holy islands on the lake, it also contains numerous wild animals, such as deer, pecaris, monkeys, and panthers. The name is generally written Zapatero, "the Shoemaker," but Froëbel says it should be Zapotera, from a well-known fruit in Nicaragua. In its original Aztec the name is Zapotl. Doubling the outermost rock of the Corrales or Isletas, a cluster of more than a hundred diminutive islands at the foot of the Mombacho, the "playa" or beach of Granada is reached in a few hours hence.

The island of Ometepe is inhabited by Indians of the Aztec race, who in their seclusion are said to still practise idolatry. All the large islands on the lake appear, indeed, from the monuments to have been sacred or holy islands with the aborigines. With the purity of the race, and the greater isolation of the inhabitants, a more obstinate antipathy against Europeans and cross races is also to be found on the island than with the other Indians of Nicaragua. A German named Woenigir settled there, and established a cotton plantation, but returning one day, after a short absence, he found his family murdered and his house burnt down. Froëbel was, however, hospitably treated by the Indians, whom he describes as dwelling in two villages, and in scattered habitations. The two volcanoes are, according to Baron Bülow, one 5100 feet high, the other 4190 feet. The lower region is covered with forests, the higher with savanas. A thick cloud mostly envelops the top of the highest peak.

The road from San Jorge on the western shores of the lake, and on the Isthmus of Rivas, is described as leading through the very garden of Nicaragua. Plantations of cacao, fields of maize, orchards loaded with every description of fruit, attest that the whole region is of unsurpassed fertility. Rivas suffered severely from the civil wars, but it is to be supposed that it has recovered its former prosperity ere this. The country of the isthmus is indeed described as being hilly, healthy, and well adapted for settlement by Europeans or Americans.

The projected canal was to have passed along the line of deepest depression in the isthmus, from the mouth of the Rio de las Lajas to

* Letter on the Physical Geography of the Nicaraguan Railway Route, p. 9.

Brito. It would have required, had such a project ever been carried out, to have regulated the quantity of water leaving the lake, or the surface of the lake would have been so lowered as to leave the river of San Juan without water.*

The road from Rivas to the little bay of Concordia, or San Juan del Sur—the terminus of the American line of transit on the Pacific—passes through a country in most part as yet unreclaimed, but having a few cattle farms situated in the woods. Tracts of land are also met with covered with the calabash-tree, called jicara, or drinking-cup-trees, and hence such tracts are called jicarals. They are on clayey soil, which is overflowed in the rainy season. Another peculiar feature of the country of the isthmus consists in small localities with permanent moisture, covered with thickets of evergreen trees. Farther west the forest follows the coast of the Pacific. Froëbel was not pleased with San Juan del Sur; he was eaten up by ticks, and the beach is described as being covered with dead bodies of large, spotted, and poisonous eels. The town consisted at that time of some twenty wooden houses, pleasantly situated, and the bay, which is of a circular form, is said to have a narrow entrance between perpendicular rocks. Close by is also another smaller bay. Passengers sometimes walked from San Juan del Sur to Virgin's Bay, on Lake Nicaragua, for the purpose of obtaining exercise between the two sea voyages. This walk is a real pleasure-trip, the scenery beautiful, and the air very pure and delightful. The distance is, as we have before seen, about twelve miles. Half way is the Hacienda de la Sebadilla. The only annoyances are large wasps'-nests, the tenants of which will attack any one making a noise in their vicinity. The name of Bahia de la Virga, or Virgin's Bay, is applied to a little indenture in a beach of black lava on the shore of Lake Nicaragua, and here a number of wooden houses have been erected for hotels, as also houses and offices for the Transit Company. Speculating girls with brown faces and black eyes have also established their stalls at the landing-places for the sale of chocolate, coffee, lemonade, liquors, oranges, pine-apples, and other fruits of the country, showing how in all parts of the world supplies arise to meet demands. The shallowness of the water of the lake and the heavy surf rendered the disembarkation of passengers at Virgin's Bay a difficult operation before the construction of the jetty. By the projected railway route the distance from San Miguelito to Virgin's Bay would be sixty miles, and from the same place to Granada by steam-boat eighty-five miles.

Granada is a town with some thirteen or fourteen thousand inhabitants, built in the usual style of Spanish-American cities under the tropics. It stands half a mile distant from the lake, at the northern foot of the extinct volcano called Mombacho, and on a soil of volcanic tuff of a very

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* The mouth of the Rio de las Lagas, on the lake, is particularly described as being one of the most favoured localities on the shores of the lake. Soil and climate are excellent, and most tropical productions might be cultivated here with advantage. The situation is as desirable as can be imagined, and as to the natural charms of the site for a family residence, they cannot be surpassed in any part of the world. The only drawback to the glowing description is, that it is not at all likely that the projected canal will ever be carried out, but that it will be superseded by the proposed railway.

friable nature. The fine sand proves very troublesome during the dry season, and is still more so from glass windows not being in use. In other respects the climate is most delightful, and mosquitoes, which give their name to the Atlantic seaboard, are scarcely known. During the rainy season heavy showers are of frequent occurrence, and are sometimes, indeed, exceedingly violent. The neighbourhood is intersected by deep ravines, and the city itself is entirely separated by one of these from one of its suburbs, which is hence called Otrabanda—"the other side." Beauty and variety are imparted to this ravine by numerous trees, shrubs, and flowering plants, as also by the presence of birds and animals. The huts of the outskirts and environs of Granada are also scattered between thickets of shrubs and fruit-trees, or hidden in the woods, which in most directions close immediately upon the city. These huts are often distinguished by their charming sites, in which the peculiar taste of their Indian or half-Indian inmates is recognisable.

In the population of the suburbs and of the scattered habitations of the environs of Granada the Indian element is predominant—in part, even exclusive. Amongst the lower classes of the town a considerable proportion of African blood is mixed with it. But to what extent the Indian element, even as a pure, unmixed race predominates, may be seen every morning in the market-place. Without the Indians it would be empty. Early in the morning they are seen arriving in long files, one after the other, men, women, and children, bringing fruits and vegetables, chickens and eggs, venison and fish, wild honey, starch prepared from the yucca or mandioca root, maize and rice, hammocks, water-jars, drinking-cups, and with other productions of their small plantations and of their industry. The Central American Indian is naturally industrious, and Froëbel declares him to be, without any doubt, the most useful and the most respectable component in the Central American population.

The same traveller asserts that he has never seen a brighter scene than the "playa," or beach of the lake. The way down from the city passes through thickets of shrubbery covered with the most splendid flowers. It is always crowded. For more than half a mile the beach is occupied by good-humoured washerwomen, hundreds of persons of both sexes bathe morning and evening, and groups of mischievous girls move to and fro in files, balancing their red water-jars on their heads. The little islands called the Corrales are mostly inhabited and overgrown with the most magnificent trees, the branches of which meet over the narrow channels between them, the Indians navigating their canoes beneath, whilst monkeys pass from one island to another above. The inhabitants are mostly fishermen, and the lake is so full of fish, that a boy can in a single throw of his net catch enough for the dinner of the whole family. These fish belong chiefly to two species called mojarra and guapote, and are always to be bought in the market of Granada. Agassiz determined that six species of fish sent to him from the lake were all hitherto undescribed, and that they thus represented six new species and two new genera. The lake is also frequented by numerous water-fowl, flamingoes, beautiful brown geese, a gigantic species of tantalus, the copper-coloured jacana, with armed wings and yellow front-plate, splendid kingfishers, large brown bitterns, white herons, ducks, teal, spoonbills, snipe, plovers, water-hens, and many others. The frigate-

bird constitutes, however, the essential feature of Nicaraguan lake scenery, and is to be seen soaring, without any perceptible motion of its wings, high above the surface of the water. There are two kinds here, corresponding to two different species of tachypetes, or fregata. The Spanish name, tijereta, is derived from tijera—a pair of scissors—designating the two long feathers in the tail of the bird.

From Granada it is proposed to carry a railway to Managua, on the lake of same name; thence deviating slightly to the west, to avoid the only range of hills on the whole section, skirting León, and ending at Port Realejo, on the Pacific. A few miles north of Granada a swampy lagoon, which is a mere morass in the dry weather, begins and follows the shores of the lake for some distance. This is Lake Songozana of Oveido, the historian of Nicaragua, having misled Squiers by saying it was "al sur" of the great lake, which he calls Cocibolca, and which Squiers translated to the south instead of towards the South Sea, or Pacific. In Oveido's time this lagoon was full of crocodiles, and the country around was infested by black panthers and other savage animals, which greatly annoyed the first Spanish settlers. At present the panthers have disappeared, and crocodiles have become more scarce. Large snakes are, however, still to be met with, as also innumerable water-fowl. Few of the snakes, it is to be observed, are poisonous in Nicaragua. A beautiful kind of the coral-snake is an exception. A species of rattlesnake is also met with, but rarely. Two kinds of snakes are, however, said to be particularly dangerous in the coast region near Greytown, and in the woods of the San Juan River, one of them called the *Culebra tobova*, the other the *Vibora de Sangre*. But this cannot be compared with the danger from venomous reptiles in Texas, New Mexico, and other southern and western parts of the Union. In some tracts along the Rio Grande a rattlesnake may be seen every few hundred paces, and at San Antonio, in Texas, no summer passes without some persons dying from the bite of the moccasin.

Managua, the seat, at one time, of the Nicaraguan legislature, is a town of twelve or thirteen thousand inhabitants, in a splendid situation on an elevated portion of the shore of the lake of the same name. The road hence to Tipitapa to the eastward, and in the line by which the projected complete line of railway will approach Managua, leads through the woods close to the lake, but without an opening to allow a view of it. Tipitapa is situated on the channel connecting the Lake of Nicaragua with that of Managua, but which was dried up by an earthquake in 1844. Between this place and the lagoon of Songozana is a plain overgrown with shrubs, tenanted by monkeys, parrots, macaws, curassows, pigeons, and other birds. The Rio and Salto, or "Fall" of Tipitapa, had not, when Froëbel visited it, a drop of water, but he does not deny that water may flow over it in the rainy season. As to the Estero Panaloya, the same competent authority considers it as merely a narrow branch of Lake Nicaragua. The Lake of Managua is very shallow, and is said to rest on a horizontal sheet of lava. There are several hot springs in the neighbourhood of Tipitapa, some of which are sulphureous, as also cold springs and pools of water. Froëbel was about to bathe in one of these, when he saw some small crocodiles rise from the bottom. On a rock in the midst of the same pool sat a repulsive-looking iguana lizard, of the

size of a boy ten years old. "Our Lord of Esquipalas" has a sanctuary at Tipitapa, and on the days of pilgrimage the place has the aspect of a gay and crowded fair.

Between Managua and Mateares a peninsula projects into the lake. It is formed of steep and wooded hills. The road takes the straight line, by passing over the neck by which the peninsula is joined to the mainland. It then descends gradually towards Mateares, passing through an open forest of scattered trees, with an undergrowth of shrubs, clad with yellow, pink, or violet flowers. The railway would, we have seen, take a direction west of these steep wooded hills. Strata of lignite, or tertiary coal, are found in the region between Mateares and the Pacific. This is more particularly a feature in the geology of the Pacific side of Central America, and in the State of Salvador this tertiary coal formation is said to have a sufficient development to promise a certain degree of future importance. Samples of lignite from the neighbourhood of Leon were of a greyish-black colour, rather hard, with the texture of wood clearly visible. On being burnt, a considerable quantity of ashes were left, in some cases of a white, in others of a red colour.

The road from Mateares to Nagarote, another station on the projected railway, is said to be most interesting. For a time it leads along under the shade of gigantic trees, while the eye passes over the lake and rests on the mountains of Matagalpa and the peaks of the Maribios, beginning with the island of Monotombito, celebrated for its Aztec idols. Next comes the noble cone of the Monotombo, above seven thousand feet high, from whose summit a thin cloud of steam rises scarcely traceable in the pure atmosphere. Other mountains follow behind. At certain places the road, still following the shore of the lake, passes over small tracts of loose sand, overgrown with shrubs of the mimosa, which yields a gum like gum-arabic, and which, from the exquisite odour of its yellow catkins, bears the name of *aroma*.

Nagarote is a mere village, formerly of bad reputation, and the road passes thence through a forest to Pueblo Nuevo, another station on the railway, and a place of some consideration. The streets are lined with rows of the columnar cactus, or organos, the houses standing back in the court-yards formed by these natural walls. The first part of the road from Pueblo Nuevo to Leon leads again through the woods, amid which may be heard the call of the chachalagua, a kind of wild-fowl or pheasant, common throughout the hot regions of Mexico and Central America, which crosses with the domestic fowl, and produces hybrids, of which the males are highly valued as fighting-cocks.

As the road approaches Leon, the capital of Nicaragua, the country opens, and a beautiful plain, well cultivated with maize, expands before the sight. To the left a ridge of wooded hills borders the sea-coast; to the right is the chain of volcanic peaks before alluded to. Leon is one of the largest cities of Central America, and is said to have a population of thirty thousand inhabitants. But it is very difficult to form an opinion as to the real amount of population, as even from the roof of the cathedral the suburbs cannot be seen in their whole extent, and, as at Granada, the scattered houses of the outer parts are hidden in a forest of trees, and between thickets of shrubbery. Within the city itself a great many of the houses are in ruins, from the effects of the long and desperate

struggles of which Leon has been the theatre during the civil wars of the country. The cathedral—a large and well-constructed stone building, with a massive cupola and roof—is one of the most distinguished works of architecture in Spanish America. The view from the roof is magnificent, and ranges over the most beautiful scenes. Round a large area the red roofs of the houses are seen here and there peeping out between trees of the most luxuriant growth, whilst the plain beyond is occupied by an immense forest, occasionally broken by fields of maize extensively and carefully cultivated. In a westerly and north-westerly direction—that of the railway—the plain slopes gradually down to the coast of the Pacific, without any intervening hills. This is not the case towards the south, where the north-western termination of a range of hills running close to the sea-coast is seen. Towards the north and the east the whole line of volcanic cones, from the Viejo to the Momotombo, rise in strange regularity of form, so as to appear more like gigantic works of art than natural mountains.

The population of the suburbs of Leon is, as at Granada, mostly Indian; that of Subtiaba, which is considered a suburb, but is more a town by itself, is entirely so, and has even preserved its Indian language. In some respects Granada is more civilised than Leon, the latter city having preserved more of the original Central American life than Granada, where the influence of foreigners and foreign mercantile connexions has been much greater. Granada, moreover, is chiefly a commercial town, and in its population the "bourgeois" character predominates, whilst Leon represents the allied interests of a landed aristocracy, and of a very active and determined democracy.

The regular road from Granada to Leon passes through Masaya, a considerable town, with a very active Indian population in its suburbs; the Indians of Masaya enjoy, indeed, a very high reputation throughout Nicaragua for their skill, taste, and application. More luxuriant plantain gardens and finer fruit-trees cannot be seen than at this place. All the fences are living hedges of wild pine-apple. Beyond is Nindiri, a large Indian village, its little thatched huts built with great regularity in rectangular streets, with plantain gardens behind. Most of these are situated in the shade of orange, mango, and other fruit-trees, and half concealed by groups of the most exquisite ornamental flowers, whilst the tallest cocoa-palms gently waft their crowns above them. Brown girls with smiling faces stand in the doorways, greeting the passing traveller in a friendly way.

From Leon to Realejo, on the Pacific, the broad plain of the interior is, as we have before observed, entirely open. This port has been surveyed by order of the British Admiralty, by Captain Sir Edward Belcher in 1838, and by Captain C. A. Cleveland in 1860, and it presents everything that can be desired in the shape of a harbour. The terminus is proposed to be at Castanon Point, at the foot of a bluff known as Mount Doña Paula. Between Castanon Bluff on the one side and Cardon Island is a passage or channel known as that of Barra Falsa, which is narrow, with a depth of from four to five fathoms, and leading to shallows beyond; but to the north is Cardon Channel, wider, with deep water, and which appears to be always available.

It is proposed, we have observed, to carry the ultimate complete line of

railway round the north-east side of the lake to Managua, and thus avoid the breaking of bulk in the navigation of the lake. This portion of the line would lie in the district of Chontales, a name given to the country that extends from the shores of the lake to the table-land of Upper Mosquitia. The chief town is Acopaya, which, including the farms of the surrounding country, has a population of two thousand six hundred inhabitants. The town is situated on a little hill, at the foot of which a river flows under the shade of large trees. Juigalpa is another town of minor importance, situated at the foot of one of the highest mountains in the district—about five thousand feet high, steep and rocky, and the greater part covered with forest. The country around has, however, the reputation of being rich in gold; but the produce of a mine newly opened and examined by Froëbel proved to be iron pyrites, more or less auriferous. This was also the case with a reputed gold mine visited by the same naturalist on the Pacific side of the lake. It is certain, however, that many gold mines exist in this region, more especially east of Juigalpa and north of Acopaya. The Indians bring gold in quills for sale at these towns. Opals are also found, as in Honduras, the Cerro de Martinez east of Acopaya being a principal locality.

The chief wealth of the province lies, however, in its pastures, and in the cattle, horses, and mules raised on them. Mules, hides, and cheese are the articles of export. The valleys of this region are hotter and less healthy than the shores of the lake, while the table-land beyond is healthier than both regions. The country is rich in game of all sorts. Manatis and fish abound in the rivers, tapirs in the thickets on the banks; deer, cavias, rabbits, pheasants, curassows, partridges, quails, pigeons, and wild-fowl are met with everywhere in the bush, on the savanas, or in the marshes. The curassows, of which there are three species, of the size of a small turkey, are said to be the most delicate wild-fowl that exists. The lower and marshy country near the lake is covered with tracts of forest and extensive jicarales or woods of calabash-trees. The mahogany-tree, "the king of the forest," is found chiefly in the marshes of the Atlantic coast; and the cedar also favours valleys, as does also the gigantic silk cotton-tree, from the trunks of which boats are hollowed out. The long-leaved or pitch-pine covers all the more elevated portion of the upland. Regular slopes and terraces are likewise met with on some of the hills, indicating the sites of the villages and strongholds of the Indians of old. A shrub or little tree, like a dwarf oak, bearing red berries, which eat like cranberries, and the bark of which is used for tanning, prevails to such an extent as to determine the aspect of the vegetation on the whole western side of Chontales. It is called Nancite. Thickets of bamboo and of a diminutive palm-tree called supa abound in the beds of torrents. The latter bears clusters of nuts, which, when roasted, have a taste very like chesnuts. The edge of the table-land is a beautiful park-like country, with green prairies, clusters of trees, and little groves. The air of the table-land is cool and refreshing; here or there in the distance a house or hut is discernible, while herds of cows and horses are seen grazing in the plain in all directions. There are numerous springs in this region, mostly marked by the presence of bamboo and supa palms, and in a circuit of not many miles in diameter a river is formed, on which the canoes of the Mosquito

Indians can pass down to Bluefields. The so-called Caribs of the Mosquito territory and of British Honduras are, as is well known, of West Indian origin, having been transplanted, in 1796, from the island of St. Vincent to Ruatan, and afterwards to Honduras, whence they have spread over the whole extent of coast from Cape Gracias to Belize. But the Chontales appear to be of a different race—the name itself is of Aztec origin, although their features partake more of the broad Mongolic than of the sharper type of the Aztec and Chorotegan races. Their language is that of the Woolwas tribes—the old Chondal language of Oveido—and the Woolwas are of the Leuca race—a race which is spread all over Mosquitia and a part of Honduras.

The savanas of this table-land are green throughout the year, there being no such distinction as that of a dry and a wet season, or of summer and winter. The temperature is always mild, and a due proportion of sunshine and rain prevails at all periods. Gigantic trees are scattered here and there over these prairies, affording shades to which the herds repair during the noontide heat. There is a small place called San Ubaldo on the western shores of the lake, whence boats are taken in going from Acoyapa to Granada. This would be a station on the complete line of railway. Altogether, a fair and reasonable consideration of the circumstances of the case, and especially of the character of the country, lead us to the conviction that not only does the projected Nicaraguan Railway present great advantages, especially in a salubrious point of view, as a line of transit, but it also presents pre-eminent advantages to the European settler, whilst it opens an already populous and productive country to commerce and civilisation.

EVENING IN THE TOWER OF LONDON.

BY NICHOLAS MICHELL.

Fort, prison, palace! 'mid thy towers we wander,
Where, in grey mantle clad, stern Eld appears;
Oh, what a crowd of memories, while we ponder,
Bursts, ghost-like, from the graves of long gone years!

Since the proud Conqueror laid these strong foundations,
What blood has here been spilt! what bitter showers
Of tears poor eyes have rained! what sad creations
Fancy hath bodied in yon prison-towers!

The Traitor's Gate—through these now silent portals
How many victims, pale and shivering, passed!
Guilty and innocent—worst, best of mortals,
Here on the outer world have looked their last.

Now warders up and down are calmly walking,
Scenting the ancient stones, sweet wallflowers blow,
Cannons are rusting, men are idly talking,
Nor care for anguish felt long years ago.

But had yon Beauchamp Tower the gift of speaking,*
Each room, each stone, a tale of grief would tell,
Of hopes for ever blasted, fond hearts breaking;
Oh, man oft makes for man an earthly hell!

Still on the darkened stones we read inscriptions,
Traced by the agonised in hopeless hours—
Love—prayers for strength—but nowhere maledictions;
Brave men, fair women—long, long faded flowers!

I stand before the Chapel; let me travel
Back through the ages; what a scene is there!
The young, the beautiful†—those curls unravel,
Pause, headsman, while they shear her golden hair!

Now round her eyes the bandage they are tying,
Her last sweet prayer, forgiveness for her foes;
Now on the block her beauteous head is lying—
A flashing stroke ends all her pangs, her woes.

And many other spirits, famed and glorious,
Have here sprung upwards from their blood-stained biers,
And, great as warriors falling when victorious,
They claim our reverence, while they ask our tears.

But all is quiet now; the past's deep ocean
Rolls o'er those buried days; the wind's faint breath
Whispers to yonder flag in tremulous motion—
No cruel law gives now the just to death.

The broad sun from the west is calmly throwing,
O'er all the fortress, crimson, slanting beams,
And in the light each rugged tower is glowing,
Like age which smiles when sleep brings youthful dreams.

An ancient clock the fleeting hour is telling,
The sentinel is pacing idly slow,
The hum of London drowsily is swelling,
The spot is peace—no more a scene of woe.

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* Sir Walter Raleigh was confined in the White Tower, but the greatest number of illustrious sufferers were imprisoned in the Beauchamp Tower, some of the walls of which are covered with inscriptions. From this tower many famous men and women were taken to execution, some being beheaded in front of St. Peter's Chapel, and others on Tower Hill, without the fortress. For a graphic account of one of the most interesting periods in the history of the Tower, see Mr. Ainsworth's historical romance, "The Tower of London."

† Lady Jane Grey.

THE DEEPDALE MYSTERY.

A NOVEL.

By M. Sullivan.

PART THE SECOND.

I.

ROBERT'S LAST CHANCE.

The story must retrograde for a moment to take up the thread of Robert Ashton's life. He had been sent to a good working school, according to the resolution expressed by his father, and had there been drilled in various branches of useful and useless knowledge. His masters always spoke of him as a dull, unpromising pupil, uncouth even among an assemblage of schoolboys, slow to learn, indifferent to praise, or to promises of reward, indifferent also to rebukes, and more likely to be made savage and surly by punishment than to be improved or stimulated to exertion. His schoolfellows found him unsociable and selfish, and few of them had any dealings with him that they did not afterwards repent. It was remarked of him that he had the miser's ingenuity for acquiring money, and also the spendthrift's instinct for scattering and wasting it. He could plan and scheme very cleverly when anything was to be gained by planning, and this is really all that can be said in favour of his mental endowments. Cunning represented the intellectual faculties with him, and the love of money was the one ennobling attribute that raised him above the level of the brutes. As he grew older, it seemed to his father that he learnt less and less; it was his grandmother's wish that he should be sent to one or other of the universities, to have his chances, she would say; but Mr. Ashton considered that very little use had been made of the chances already enjoyed by him, and he decided to take him into his own office when he was between sixteen and seventeen years old, there to initiate him into the regular routine of business, and thus to utilise the one talent that the boy appeared to possess.

For the first few months Robert Ashton showed a certain amount of industry and perseverance in learning to place his foot upon the first spoke in the great wheel of commerce, that brings such golden prizes to those who have skill and courage to turn it round successfully. But the process was too slow, the profits that he saw a glimpse of in the future were too far off to stimulate his ambition, and after a time he became less and less regular in his attendance during business hours. He was clever in finding excuses for his absence, but before long they failed to satisfy his father, who resolved to keep a more vigilant watch upon him for the future.

But Mr. Ashton's plans for the future guidance and general welfare of his son were rudely broken by the news that Robert had not been seen, either at home or at the office, for a longer time than his periods of absence without leave had as yet extended to. There was a pause of anxious expectation, but still he did not make his appearance; and then, while Mr. Ashton was considering what step it would be better to take, it was discovered that he had been robbed of a considerable sum by means

of a forged cheque, which had been presented at his banker's by his son, and duly honoured.

It is often said that a calamity of this kind, sorrow and disgrace both in one, falls upon a person like a thunderbolt; but as very few people have any experience of the effect of thunderbolts, the idea, to the general public, must be rather a vague one. It did fall very heavily indeed upon Mr. Ashton, and it helped, with other troubles that beset him at about the same time, to shorten his life and to embitter the remaining portion of it.

He decided that it would be better to do nothing at all in the matter, to accept the money-loss that he had sustained, and to institute no inquiry or pursuit after the fugitive, who, he was persuaded, would be heard of when the money he had embezzled was spent. The two girls were advised to ask no questions about his absence, and the crime that he had committed was never alluded to before them. It is probable that Grace, with her fine instincts and quick perceptions, had some knowledge, or at least some suspicion, of the real state of things; but Grace Meadows knew and guessed nothing, except that Robert was away a long time, on some mysterious business, she supposed, it was so seldom alluded to in her presence.

When the criminal did return, he resembled the prodigal of Scripture in the condition of utter destitution to which he was reduced, and was as unlike him as possible in his frame of mind, and in his desires for the future. He did not in the least repent of the crime that he had committed, but he was sorry that he had not had an opportunity of abstracting a much larger sum; he did not suppose that his father would prosecute him, because by doing so he would put himself to fresh expense and annoyance, without regaining any of the money of which he had been robbed. He had as little idea of any principle of abstract justice as he had of natural tenderness and affection.

His calculations were partly right, for his father supplied him with immediate necessaries, and did not prosecute him, or threaten to do so, for the fraud; but, on the other hand, he declined to receive him again into his office, or to maintain him in idleness, and offered him his choice between a colonial appointment, and a clerkship in the office of Mr. Brooks, a bullion merchant. The colonial appointment would have removed him to the extreme edge of civilisation, and would have placed him at a distance from many common forms of temptation on that very account; the clerkship would be in London, but Mr. Brooks, who had consented to give him this opportunity of regaining character and position, was aware of the crime that he had committed, and would inevitably regard him with suspicion, and observe his conduct with additional scrutiny.

After a vain protest against this hard alternative, Robert Ashton decided upon installing himself in the office of Mr. Brooks, an old friend of his father's, who had been consulted by Mr. Ashton when the blow first fell upon him. There the hopeful youth remained up to the time when our story reopens; obliged to keep pretty regularly to business hours, and without any opportunity for fraud that his ingenuity could turn to good (or bad) account. His father's death had happened immediately after he had completed his twenty-first year, but the property to

which he was entitled, and it was by no means large, was greatly diminished in a very short time.

Robert was associated in business with William Brooks, the son of his employer, a young man somewhat older than himself, and so totally unlike him in tastes and temperament, that it was a wonder to see them together when the work that they shared between them was over for the day. Yet so it was that William Brooks rather affected the company of Robert Ashton, and disliked him very thoroughly all the time.

The office of Mr. Brooks was at a considerable distance from Clifton-street West, and for many reasons Robert found it convenient to have lodgings in the City, so that during many months of the year the two girls saw little of him. When he did favour them with his company, it was observed that Grace was as completely under his influence, and as ready to sacrifice her own wishes and principles to further any views of his, as she had been when a child. This strange subjection was especially puzzling to Grace Meadows; she could not in the least understand it, and while she pitied Grace for the species of bondage in which she was apparently held, she disliked Robert all the more for it. And he, for his part, took very little trouble to make a favourable impression on her; he knew that her fortune would be very large, and that the interest of it would be under the control of her husband; he had been assured by his grandmother that she, like all other girls, would be pleased to receive the attentions of a lover, and that the prize was quite within his reach if he would only stretch out his hand to grasp it; but up to this time he had not attempted anything in the way of love-making, for Grace Meadows' manner to him had been cold and repelling, and he himself belonged to that class and section of young men who are invariably awkward and embarrassed in the presence of virtuous and educated women. He found very little to say to Grace Meadows, and as that little was coldly listened to, he found less and less; believing all the time that through her great attachment to his sister he wielded a power over her to which she would submit, sooner or later; and comforted by the assurances of Mrs. Ashton that the absence of any signs or tokens of cousinly regard on the part of Grace Meadows tended to prove the existence of another kind of feeling. He only hoped that she would not require much love-making, but would fall readily into his views, and accept with as little "bother" as possible the sacrifice that he was prepared to make.

Those weeks of absence from home which had followed the fraud that he had committed on his father had been spent, as may be supposed, in company the reverse of respectable. He had become acquainted with professional sharpers of one kind or another, and with the lowest grade of gentlemen on the turf. Under the guidance of these worthies he had entered into several betting transactions, some of which had unfortunately proved successful; unfortunately, for although the money thus acquired was quickly staked again, and generally lost, the taste for this species of speculation strengthened into a passion under the encouragement of the former success. His engagement with Mr. Brooks did not prevent him from consorting with his former associates, but there was one great drawback which prevented him from joining in their plans and projects, and that was the want of money. Business temptations of all kinds were now kept carefully out of his way, and though his salary, added to an allow-

ance that he received from his father until he came of age, was enough to provide him with every comfort, it was certainly not enough to enable him to indulge in betting transactions. And so it was that both salary and allowance were often staked before they were due.

Under these circumstances Robert Ashton was continually in debt and difficulties, and it happened that these embarrassments came to a climax during the early part of that very summer of which we have spoken, when Grace and he attained respectively their twenty-first year, Grace Meadows being two years younger. It was the old story, a horse that was sure to win, only it didn't; a speculation that *must* succeed, according to every calculation of the knowing ones. Robert Ashton, already heavily in debt, risked a sum that he could not possibly pay if he lost it; but then he was assured that he could not lose, and this one "haul" was to make up for all previous ill luck. Finally, as the sagacious reader knows beforehand, an outsider won, and the "safe" horse was nowhere. And debts of other kinds had multiplied even during the short time that had elapsed since his twenty-first birthday; debts of extravagance that must not come to the knowledge of his employer, or he would lose his situation to begin with. He was considering what it would be better to do to ward off the ruin that seemed to be close upon him, when he received the following letter from Mrs. Ashton:

"My dear Robert,—I think that the holiday which you were promised in summer will soon commence, and if this is the case, I must urge you not to lose any more time in coming home, and making a favourable impression on Grace Meadows. I trust that you have not formed any other plans for your holiday, and if you have, I would advise you to give them up, for it is quite clear that Grace Meadows will be asked out a good deal now. She is nineteen years old, and it was only your father's illness that prevented her from going into society last year; she received two invitations within the last ten days, but did not accept them because I told her that the mourning is still too recent to allow of her doing so with propriety. This is really only an excuse, and one that cannot last much longer; she is naturally inclined to be gay and to like society, and it is quite certain that she will not be out many months without getting engaged. She is good-looking, accomplished, and taking in manner, and as her fortune is known to be so very large, she is sure to be besieged by disinterested adorers. It is certain that if you do not wish the prize to slip through your fingers, you must now take a little pains to secure it. The attentions of a lover will be something new to her now, and will please her accordingly; and if you can obtain her consent, I should strongly advise a marriage with the least possible delay, so that she may have no opportunity of changing her mind. Her being under age would be no obstacle; indeed, the will of old Mr. Meadows especially provides for a contingency of that kind. The consent of the trustees would have to be obtained, but they could have no possible objection to such a desirable arrangement. You and your sister must manage it between you; indeed, you must stir her up, and get her to work a little harder for you. Grace Meadows thinks such a great deal of her, and of everything she says, that I am sure she can induce her to accept you, if she will only take the trouble. Depend upon it, some one else will be getting engaged to her if you do not make haste, and it would be too bad for such a

fortune to be lost to the family through inertness and delay. Come to us as soon as you can, and come prepared to conquer, is the advice of

"Your affectionate grandmamma,

"G. Ashton."

Here was an easy way out of all his difficulties! A last chance! Marry Grace Meadows this very summer, and obtain immediate possession of the interest of her fortune. There would be no impediments in the way when he had once gained her consent, for the trustees would have no reasonable grounds for refusing their sanction, as they knew nothing of that unpleasant episode in his past life; and then he knew that they were both in England at that time, so that the delay of waiting for an answer from Australia would be avoided. It would be the very thing. Yes, he would spread the news of the grand marriage which he was about to make among his creditors, who could easily find out for themselves the existence of his cousin, an orphan and richly dowered; and then he would keep his word, marry Grace Meadows, pay such of his debts as he should be absolutely obliged to pay, and commence the life of luxury and pleasure for which Nature had evidently intended him.

He was brooding over these matters, with Mrs. Ashton's letter crumpled up in his hand, when a knock at the street door recalled him to the exigencies of the present moment, and he applied his eye with great caution to a crevice of window-pane between the blind and the shutter, to decide whether he would be at home to his visitor, if, perchance, it should be any one who desired to see him. He speedily recognised William Brooks, one of his creditors, indeed, but by no means a pressing one, and as quickly decided that he would be at home. He wondered why it was that young Brooks was so surprisingly good natured to him, and at one time was inclined to set him down as a fool; but then again it occurred to him that Brooks probably suspected the impending marriage with the heiress, and wished to stand well with him on that account.

William Brooks was three years older than Robert Ashton, and was at this time twenty-four years old; he was rather good-looking, and was the possessor of the moustache erewhile alluded to by Grace Meadows in one of her mischievous moods; he was clear-headed, and a good man of business, and his character will show itself (or we hope that it will) in the course of this story.

"I just dropped in," he said to Robert, "to ask if you have had any news from Clifton-street lately."

"Yes," Robert answered, "a letter to-day from the old one; no good in it, though."

"Indeed! No bad news, I hope."

"Oh dear no. They're all right and tight, and fit for Sunday. I only meant to say that the communication from my respected ancestress does not contain a cheque."

"Oh!" William Brooks discreetly refrained from saying more on this subject, as any approach to a discussion on Robert's money matters would have been sure to result in an appeal for another loan. "Are you going to stay there this summer?"

"Well, I did intend to run down to the North; there are some races,

that it will be a great pity to miss. But the old lady seems to think that I ought to go home; the girls are dull, and all that, you know."

William Brooks wondered in his heart in what way the boor with whom he was talking could help to enliven them, but it would have been scarcely polite to put the question in a direct form, so he said, instead:

"Are you to take them somewhere or other? To be their escort on some travelling expedition?"

"No; hang it, no. I couldn't stand that sort of thing at all. When I take to seeing life in the provinces, I don't go spooning about with a lot of women, I can tell you. But granny wants me to brighten them up a bit, and I don't mind telling you, in confidence, that it's very likely I may get hooked in for life before they've done with me."

William Brooks did not perceive his meaning.

"Before who have done with you?" he asked.

"Granny and the girls. You see they want me to marry Grace Meadows, and it would be a very good spec, as far as that goes; but then it comes hard to give up one's liberty—confoundedly hard."

And he sighed deeply as he contemplated the sacrifice.

"To marry Grace Meadows!" William Brooks set this down at once as a lying and impudent boast, but he kept his opinion to himself. "Is the lady herself very anxious for the honour that awaits her?" he asked.

"Well, rather that way, I believe; girls always want to get married. And taking all things into account, I don't see that I can do better."

"I would give it mature consideration before I decided," William Brooks observed.

But Robert was perfectly inaccessible to irony, being strongly fortified with stupidity and conceit, and he replied:

"I shall, of course; it ties a fellow by the leg, you see."

William Brooks condoled with him on this dismal change in his prospects, and hoped that the day of execution was not fixed.

"No, not yet; women take such a blessed lot of time to get their toggery together. But I don't think you'll see me any more at the office after this month."

And for the first time a kind of astonished doubt crept into the mind of William Brooks—a doubt as to whether there might be a grain of truth in Robert Ashton's words.

"I shall not be out of town this summer," he said, presently. "I shouldn't wonder if I drop in at Clifton-street, to see how you do your love-making."

"Oh, I shall leave all that to the lady," Robert answered.

"Ah, I see, you belong to the number of those who would be wooed, and not unsought be won."

"Yes, that's it. They can't expect me to be making speeches like the people in novels, you know."

It occurred to William Brooks to wonder whence his experience of novels was derived, as his tastes were the reverse of literary, and even the daily papers seldom attracted him for more than a minute at a time; but he did not make any inquiries on this subject.

He had found out all that he wanted to know—that the Clifton-street people were well, and were likely to remain in town during the summer

and as he walked home he wondered over the news that Robert had gratuitously supplied him with, and turned it over and over in his mind. No, there could be no possible foundation for it, the idea was preposterous; Grace Meadows, with her intelligence and refinement, could scarcely be associated even in thought with the stupid lout that he had just quitted. Mrs. Ashton might desire such a thing, and probably would make some attempt to bring it to pass; but she had no possible control over Grace Meadows, who, moreover, possessed a true friend older than herself, one who would counsel her for the best, and would not allow her youth and inexperience to be taken advantage of, supposing that, under any circumstances, it might have been possible to entrap her into such a marriage. But in imagining that the twin would oppose the wish of her brother, William Brooks reckoned without his host, as we are all apt to do at times. And when once his thoughts had taken this turn, the image of Grace Meadows slipped out of his mind, and there reigned in its stead the remembrance of another Grace, fairer, paler, more slender, with a thoughtful depth in those luminous grey eyes, through which it seemed as if her soul could sometimes show itself. It was very strange that she should be Robert Ashton's sister, but not so unaccountable when one remembered that they were twins; she had evidently absorbed all the finer and more delicate shades of character that would have been divided between two ordinary mortals, and so had left him a double allowance of mental dross. This was William Brooks' way of solving the problem, and perhaps it was as good a way as any other.

II.

THE INVITATION.

TEA was on the table at No. 1, Clifton-street West; the large window was opened down to the ground, to let in as much summer fragrance as the narrow London garden could supply, and Grace Meadows had established herself close beside it, with her cup and saucer on a small table near her. William Brooks, who had "dropped in" a short time previously, was also sitting at a distance from the tea-table, and was chatting with the heiress, but his eyes often wandered in the direction of the other Grace; he looked more at her, though he talked more to her cousin.

Grace Meadows had just propounded a riddle, of which she declared herself to be the sole inventor and patentee: "Why should arithmeticians have good appetites?" And William Brooks, listening with half-divided attention, had failed to catch the slightest clue that might lead to a solution of the enigma, whereupon Robert Ashton, who was seated at the tea-table, was called upon for his opinion.

"Oh, bother, because they should, I suppose," the ingenuous youth replied; adding, with his accustomed refinement, "There's never any fun in ladies' riddles."

William ventured to suggest: "Because their studies are dry;" but meditatively added, that it wouldn't do. Which it certainly would not. The twin, who knew the answer, presently enlightened him:

"Because one *swallow* does not make a *summer*."

William laughed heartily at the novel application of the two words;

and Mrs. Ashton, who had just come into the room with a letter in her hand, tittered feebly at the proverb which the wit of Grace Meadows had in some way or other turned into a joke. But Robert, whose civilisation was less advanced, did not even assume the virtue which he certainly had not, or pretend to understand what was quite unintelligible to his obtuse perceptions, but openly wondered what was meant by such a somethinged answer. While he was still speaking, Mrs. Ashton hastily interposed.

"It is so very nice and clever, and so like you, dear, but you know that Robert's brain is exercised in quite a different way; all business, business, business, from morning till night, and so he has not time to cultivate those flowers of imagery that you excel in. Thank you, love, a cup of tea with very little cream. This evening's post has brought me such a kind letter from Mrs. Renshaw, inviting both my dear girls, and Robert also, to spend a few weeks with them at their country-seat in Deepdale; they have no daughters of their own, you know, and it will be such a nice change for them to have you all three, only I don't know at all how I shall get on without you." And the old lady looked mournfully round the room, as if it were already empty and denuded.

"I am sure, grandmamma," the twin observed, "I shall be glad to stay with you, if you think you shall feel lonely, for I suppose Grace Meadows really ought to go, as Mr. Renshaw is her senior trustee."

"Thank you, dear, but it will be a nice change for Robert too, and, as things are, he and Grace Meadows could not well travel by themselves."

Robert here put in something about the confounded slowness of country-houses, but his remark was judiciously covered by Mrs. Ashton, who engaged Grace Meadows in conversation at the same moment.

Yes, the heiress declared that she should like to visit the Renshaws, whom she dimly remembered in Australia; they were old friends of her father's, and had been very kind to her, and Mr. Renshaw had taken a great deal of trouble on her account, and it would be nice to get away from London in the pleasant summer-time. But she and Grace could travel very well together; there would not be the slightest occasion for troubling Robert to escort them.

Mrs. Ashton sweetly assured her that nothing but her charming ignorance of the world and of its wicked ways could have allowed her to imagine that two pretty girls could undertake such a journey alone and unprotected; and she answered for Robert's willingness to be their escort, and even managed to prevent him from saying anything glaringly rude and ill bred, till tea was over, and the two girls strolled out into the garden, whither William Brooks accompanied them; then did she open upon him a regular assault and battery, beginning as follows:

"My dear Robert, if you do not take a little pains to make yourself agreeable to Grace Meadows, you may as well give up all hope of her fortune at once. Cannot you behave a little more like other young men, and try to please and conciliate her? She's worth the trouble, or, at least, her belongings are."

"I don't know what you mean," Robert answered, sullenly. "You told me that when I made love to her she would be glad to have me, because all girls wanted husbands."

"But you are not making love to her; you are scarcely civil to her; and while you are making up your mind some one else will be walking off with her. Fortunately, John Renshaw is engaged already."

"Well, I did mean to begin this evening," he replied, "but Brooks came in and began chattering, and I thought I would put it off till to-morrow. There can't be any need for me to go dangling after them to Deepdale, can there?"

"Certainly you must go, and while there you must get engaged to her—a country-house is capital for that sort of thing—and you must get your sister to help you without any more shilly-shallying. She must persuade Grace Meadows to accept you; don't tell her what to say, leave that to her, but just tell her she must do it. And, Robert, it is absolutely necessary that you should begin to be more polished and like a gentleman in your manner; I believe it is the fashion now for young men to be rather bearish, but, you see, that sort of thing does not take with Grace Meadows. The courtly manners that were in vogue when I was a girl would go down better with her. Do begin at once to study little matters of etiquette; you will have a hundred opportunities for being polite and attentive to her on the journey."

"Well, I'll do my best," Robert promised, "and I'll speak to Grace this very night. She must see what she can do for me."

Grace, meanwhile, was walking up and down the short garden path with William Brooks, for Grace Meadows had opportunely remembered certain preparations that it would be indispensably necessary for her to make before packing up for the journey to Deepdale, and she left the two to themselves.

"How very lively and full of spirits your cousin seems to be," William Brooks observed, after she was gone.

"Yes, it is hardly possible to be dull while she is in the house. She is very young, you know; sometimes I feel as if my two years of seniority amount to half a century at least. No doubt the trials of life will sober her down quite soon enough when they come."

"She will marry, I suppose, before very long?"

"That is more than any one can tell," the twin replied; "but I should think that she is likely to marry young."

"Grace," he ventured to ask here, "do you think that she is likely to become your sister, by marrying Robert?"

"I think that Robert wishes it very much, and I should be very pleased if it were to happen; but I cannot say that I think it likely, because Grace Meadows herself shows a decided objection to it."

"That is what I supposed, and you cannot wonder that she objects; such a marriage would be so very, very unsuitable."

"Robert wishes it," the twin replied; and William Brooks could only wonder how it was that, with her delicate feminine instincts, she could get no further than "Robert wishes it."

"Robert may wish it because such an arrangement would be a good one for himself," he said, "and yet it might not conduce to his happiness, much less to hers."

"These are questions that I cannot discuss," the twin replied. "What Robert wishes I wish, and, as I cannot tell why it is so, it is useless for me to reason about it." In saying this she only answered the first part of his remark; presently she added, "It is quite possible that the fulfilment of our most earnest wishes would not make us happy."

William did not pursue the subject, but asked her if she had made up

her mind to go to Deepdale. He was glad to escape from the question which involved her mental subservience to her brother—a subject that always pained and puzzled him.

"Yes," she replied, "grandmamma does not seem to wish me to stay with her, and I am very fond of old country-houses, and I fancy that the Renshaws must be kind-hearted people, from what Grace Meadows remembers of them."

"And do you go soon?"

"I did not see the invitation. Yes, I suppose they would not be likely to give a long and formal notice."

"Then perhaps I may not see you again for some weeks, and I had looked forward to staying in London this summer, and to seeing you constantly."

"What delightful day-dreams you must have had," Grace answered, speaking quickly, though her heart beat fast with a presentiment of what was coming; "I can just fancy you closing your eyes, and leaning back in your chair, and picturing to yourself the charms of a city life, the glare of wall and pavement, the smoke, the clatter, and the crowd, from which no cruel fate seemed likely to separate you."

But her voice was not quite steady enough for joking, and he went on all the same.

"Grace, you know why I wished to stay in town; all places are pretty much alike to me as long as I can get a chance of having you often with me, and now we are to be separated for weeks; but you must tell me before you go whether I have been mistaken in thinking that you know how very much I care for you, and that you do not discourage me or forbid me to hope. Tell me that, Gracie; just yes, or no, before you go."

Grace took refuge in telling him that his last sentence came in rhyme, and she might have added that his speech was clumsy and ill-constructed, after the manner of lovers' addresses. Only she did not. And when the two returned to the house some twenty minutes later, Grace was an engaged young lady, and William Brooks had mentally registered a vow, in addition to his outspoken vows of love and fidelity, that when once he and Grace were married, she should be effectually separated from the influence wielded over her by her brother—an influence that he hated with that peculiar intensity of hate that is only engendered by fear.

Grace would have been glad to retire early that evening; the aspect of life was changing to her, and she had much to think over and to arrange in her own mind. But Robert waylaid her on the stairs, and insisted on "having it out with her" before she went to bed.

"The fact of the matter is this," he began; "I owe a heap of money that I can't pay, and it's a choice between utter ruin and a marriage with Grace Meadows this summer."

Grace was horror-struck.

"And have you asked her to marry you? I'm afraid it's no use; but have you tried to persuade her?"

"No. I'm not very well up to that sort of thing. You must persuade her; you can make her do anything you like, and you know it; of course I'll do all I can, be very civil to her, and pop the question, and all that; but mind, you must find out how to get her to accept me, and quickly too."

"Indeed, Robert, I am afraid that you overrate my influence with her; nothing would please me more than to see her your wife; it would be for your good, certainly, and I hope—yes, I hope—for hers also. But as long as she decidedly opposes such a step, how can I possibly force it upon her?"

"You can if you will," Robert persisted; "and at all events you must, or I shall go smash."

"How much do you owe?" she asked, after a pause.

"Heaven knows! Don't talk to me about my debts, but put me in the way of paying them."

"What were they contracted for?"

"Everything. Clothes, jewellery, horses, bets, and the rest of it."

"What can your creditors do? Can they proceed against you?"

"Yes, any day."

"But you were not of age when you contracted these debts—or some of them."

"No; that is in my favour, so far. But as soon as ever the debts get to the knowledge of old Brooks, I shall lose my situation, my last chance, you see, and the old lady will turn against me too, when she comes to know everything."

Grace considered, anxious to find out the silver lining of this cloud.

"Have you not full control over the property that has lately come to you?" she asked.

Robert laughed.

"What a simpleton you must be to suppose that I did not draw upon that directly," he observed. "I went to a broker, and told him to sell out, the day that I got it; that was the very first thing that I did, after signing the deed of release for the trustees."

"Oh, Robert, it was not right; the wrong was to yourself, but still it was a wrong. Oh! what are you to do?"

"Marry Grace Meadows, and be as right as ninepence."

"I would help you if I could, you know that, Robert."

"That's all devilish fine, if you would only do the thing, and not talk so much about it. If you were anything like Susan Marsh now, she doesn't lose time in chattering when there's anything to be done for a friend, but she goes right at it, and does it."

"Who is this Susan Marsh? I have heard you speak of her before."

"A very jolly girl, and a good judge of a horse; she told me that cursed brute wouldn't win. I shouldn't be in the hole I am now if I had taken Mrs. Marsh's advice."

"Is she a widow, then?"

"Well, yes; something of that kind. You would turn up your nose at her, I suppose; but yet she is a gentleman's daughter, and worth a dozen fine ladies, any day."

"But, Robert, if she is the one that you really prefer, you should not allow yourself for a moment to think of Grace Meadows, only because she has money, and Susan Marsh, I suppose, has none."

"That's nonsense; who said anything about really prefer? I really prefer Grace Meadows; I love her—there, will that do for you? Go to her this very night, and make a serious beginning for me."

"What am I to say?"

"Oh, come now, Grace, that won't do. If you have made up your mind to get me ruined, say so at once; if not, just help me, without any bother. Tell her that I'm desperately fond of her, and all that, and don't go to bed till you've got her to say she'll consider about it. It really must be done this summer."

"I wish I could make you understand, Robert, that in such a very serious matter as this, Grace Meadows has a will of her own, as is only right and natural. Nothing that I can say has the least effect, when her will is distinctly opposed to my suggestions."

"Now look here, Grace, it has to be done, if not by fair means, then by foul. Oh, you need not look so frightened, some safe plan might be thought of: nobody wants to hurt her, you know. If you were like any other girl, you wouldn't want pressing so hard; you'd just do it out of good nature, without all this —— bother."

"Do what? Try to persuade her to marry you? Because I've done that already."

"And failed, of course?"

"Yes, she begged me to avoid the subject altogether for the future."

"Very well. Now, instead of avoiding it, you must begin again, and try as you never tried before; and if you fail, you must be ready to help me to bring it about in some other way."

He nodded significantly as he spoke.

"Oh, Robert! what do you mean? What way?"

"Never mind what I mean. I mean that the income from Grace Meadows' fortune has got to pay my debts, and to keep me from rotting in a jail, or some worse place; there are worse places, I can tell you. Of course it will only take a very small slice of the cake to do this, and she and I will live happy ever after on the rest. But I must marry her quickly, and you must help me to do it. *Must*, remember."

And he strode down-stairs again and told Mrs. Ashton that he had had it out with Grace, and that he was going in seriously for overcoming the fancies of his cousin, and for a speedy marriage. She applauded his resolution, and the pair took counsel together as to the best means to be pursued in case the influence of Grace should fail, as it possibly might, after all.

In the mean time, Grace had slowly mounted the remaining stairs that led to the door of her room, thinking all the while how hard it was that this task should be imposed upon her, and feeling beforehand the certainty that defeat awaited her. And then, what plan of Robert's would she be called upon to further? She tried not to dwell upon the hint that he had suggested, but it forced itself upon her memory in spite of her efforts to shut it out, and there rose before her the shadowy outline of some impossible plan for obtaining possession of Grace Meadows and her fortune, in the execution of which she would be called upon to assist. She said to herself that, if it should be anything in the nature of a wrong to Grace Meadows, she would not be induced to aid it in any way; and just as she said this a strange feeling came over her that she had already experienced more than once. It was like a numbing or paralysing of her mental faculties, a torpor taken advantage of by some will that was not her will, but that put itself in the place of hers, and was not repulsed. She stood still for a little while, conscious that this feeling would soon pass away,

and a thought came into her mind that there was a knot in the web of life around her, that she would be *obliged* either to untie or to cut through. Oh, how she wished that it could be untied! Might it not be possible for Grace Meadows to learn in time to love her cousin? He certainly was fond of her, he said that he was, and her influence would gradually soften and improve his character, while her wealth would place him above the reach of temptation, and the responsibilities that it would bring with it, would change him at once from a mere pleasure-seeker into a man of business. She had known or heard of many instances in which prosperity had exercised a steadying influence on character; she thought of a certain scene in Shakspeare's "Henry the Fifth," and of its modern parallels, as she softly turned the handle of her cousin's door.

Grace Meadows was combing her hair as industriously as a mermaid, and sitting near the half-open window that looked out upon the little garden, on which the newly risen moon was shining.

"See, Gracie," she said, as the twin came in, "the moon is near the full, and we are to travel to Deepdale in a week, so we shall have a nice light evening if we should be out late. Do you know what time the train gets to Derby?"

"William Brooks thinks we had better travel by the mid-day train that gets to Derby at six in the afternoon," Grace replied. "There is an earlier train, but it is very slow, and it stops at almost every station."

"I say, Gracie, was that long conversation in the garden all about trains? Because, if so, you must be a walking 'Bradshaw' by this time."

"Leave off teasing," Grace answered, "and then perhaps I will tell you something about it. No, it was not all about trains."

"I thought not. And is it all settled? And am I to see in Mr. Brooks a new cousin, really and truly?"

"I will tell you all about it, instead of only something. First he said he was sorry we were going into Deepdale, because he was going to stay in town this summer, and he had hoped to have seen us constantly. I tried to quiz him a little bit just to ward off what was coming, but he would persist in saying that I must have seen how fond he was of me, and so on."

"Details to be supplied by the imagination. But you should consider, Gracie, that I have never had an offer, so that I may not be able to fill in the outline correctly."

"You may not have had a direct offer, dear, but you know that Robert has only been prevented from speaking out by his unfortunate shyness, and by something in your manner that has repelled him."

Grace Meadows turned upon her a keen and penetrating glance; her lips moved, as if to speak, but she checked herself in time.

"I won't say that, Gracie, for you are his sister," she said, presently.

"Yes," the twin answered, "and something more than a sister. Once, you know, we lived one life between us, and even now I feel that strange *oneness*, sometimes almost as a kind of bondage."

"Then why not try to shake it off? I have often noticed and wondered at it, and now you have spoken of it openly, and I may speak too. Why not make a strong mental effort, and rise superior to this wretched subjugation of your will to another's?"

"Ah, you can't understand," the twin interposed here. "I feel it as one sometimes feels the bondage of the body. Have you never felt that it would be awfully jolly to shake off the encumbering mass of clay and float about, free and disembodied? But that, you know, would be ceasing to exist, and so with the parallel."

Grace Meadows made no reply; she was wondering whether the twin could have inherited any tinge of her mother's malady. But the grey eyes that looked into hers shone clear and steadfast, and she felt instinctively that the evil was no form of monomania, but an influence exercised from without, and to her as incomprehensible as it was painful.

III.

AFRAID.

THE moon rose higher, and the shadows deepened; the night wore on, and still the cousins talked.

"And have you told grandmamma yet?" Grace Meadows asked, presently.

"No. I must tell her before long; it will be right to do so, of course, but I can't feel that she stands at all in the place of a parent to me. If papa were still with us, I should have sent William at once to him, but now that I have lost him I must think and judge for myself."

"Yes, and I think that you have judged wisely. You may be sure that I like William Brooks very, *very* much, for I feel contented with the engagement. He is almost good enough for Gracie."

"Gracie" smiled.

"I have known him such a very long time, you know: I can't remember the time when I was not fond of him. How strange those marriages seem that are made up suddenly, after a short acquaintance."

"I don't altogether agree with you there," Grace Meadows answered. "I think that kindred natures may quickly find out their affinity; but I know that you are very dependent upon old associations."

"Yes, more than most ,people," the twin assented; "and in matters relating to love and marriage the feeling is so strong with me, that my pleasure in reading Shakspeare is diminished by the suddenness with which his characters conceive their unalterable attachments, Rosalind and Orlando, for example. Fancy being introduced to a nice young man, and feeling instantly that your destiny required you to marry him, or to be miserable all your life!"

Both the girls laughed heartily.

"But this does not spoil Shakspeare for me," Grace Meadows replied, "because I feel an under-current of fatality running through the tale. The nice young man is brought forward at the right moment by circumstances over which he has no control; he *has* to fall in love and to be fallen in love with, and in doing the one and submitting to the other, he does but bow to the decrees of Fate. It had all been preordained, and probably for the best."

But a cloud had come over the twin's face; on this point she was more than usually sensitive.

"Don't talk about Fate, dear, and especially not to-night," she said

"to my fancy, Fate is a vague and threatening spectre, whose business it is to come between us and our chances of earthly happiness."

Grace Meadows hastened to make war against such gloomy sentiments uttered on this night, of all nights in the year. She knew that reasoning would be quite thrown away, so she tried the effect of a few playful words, and soon brought back a smile to the face before her.

But Fate was very near them then—even at the door.

The twin would not yet abandon her brother's cause as hopeless, and she made a final effort for his sake before she left her cousin's room.

"I want to ask you just once," she began, "to think as favourably as you can of what Robert wishes so much. Let me tell you all the truth. He owes some money that he cannot pay; he has his faults, like other people, and they are very much on the surface, but I don't think they are worse faults on that account. Any one can see that he is rough and unpolished, for he has not been thrown much in the society of refined and educated women; he has not been very steady, having had no great motive to steadiness ever set before him; but he is attached to you in his undemonstrative way——"

"Undemonstrative!" Grace Meadows exclaimed. And then she coughed and checked herself; she had been going to say that he was demonstratively rude and disagreeable.

"In his undemonstrative way," the twin continued. "And if you could return the attachment, I do not think that you would ever have to repent marrying him. He would then be freed from the many temptations that now appeal to him, sometimes too successfully; constant association with you would correct all surface faults of speech and manner, a very little of your large inheritance would set him free from all past embarrassments, and his position as your husband would supply the strongest motives for future steadiness. Could you, dear, do you think you could?" And her eyes dilated with a hope that was urged on by a secret and unconfessed fear.

"No," Grace Meadows replied at once. "You have been very frank and honest with me, Gracie; now let me be so with you. I not only do not love him, but I positively dislike him. I cannot help it, although he is my cousin and your twin-brother. I should look forward to this journey into Deepdale with far greater pleasure if he were not to be with us. Now I have told you the truth, and is it possible that you can still wish me to take him for a husband?"

The twin answered quietly, "No." There was silence for some moments, and then she rose, and with trembling fingers lighted a match and her candle, for until now the girls had been talking by the light of the moon. Her voice was strangely low and unsteady as she wished Grace Meadows a faint good night; she knew that the unknown something which she feared could not now be averted, and she did not know whether it could be resisted.

A fair future seemed to be mapped out before her; the dream of her girlhood had taken form and substance, and her heart should have been filled with the fulness of content. But a great dread had taken possession of her mind, a shapeless terror, that scarcely let her dwell for a moment on the new hopes and prospects that should have absorbed all her thoughts. The moon had set, and the early daylight of a summer morning had looked in at her window before she went to sleep; troubled

sleep, for in the land of dreams that formless dread arrayed itself in strange, distorted shapes, and she saw herself now forging a document which was to express the consent of Grace Meadows to the marriage with Robert; and now fabricating evidence to prove that the marriage had already taken place. In all these feverish dreams she saw one thing distinctly, she saw herself acting and moving under the control of another will, unable to escape from its influence, and, worst of all, unwilling to do so. And this idea ran through the whole, and made a kind of keynote to which every one of the dreary variations would return. When she came out of her room in the morning, Robert was waiting for her on the stairs.

"Well?" he observed, interrogatively.

"It is not well, Robert, as far as your wish is concerned. I urged Grace Meadows to the very utmost, and she told me in reply that she did not and could not love you, and more than this, that her feeling towards you did not even amount to ordinary liking; she asked me whether, under those circumstances, I could still urge her to consent to the marriage, and I was obliged to answer that I could not do so."

She spoke rapidly, feeling anxious to give utterance to the whole unpalatable truth, and to get it over.

Robert looked at her fixedly, with a face that darkened every moment; then he muttered an oath, and hastily descended the remaining stairs. All that day he neither looked at nor spoke to either of the girls, but lounged restlessly from room to room, frequently whistling, and sometimes casting a scowl towards his sister. Mrs. Ashton was evidently uneasy, not knowing what had happened; she made sprightly little attempts to draw Robert into conversation, and finding him impracticable, she addressed herself to Grace Meadows.

"What a sweet collar you are working, love, and what an ingenious plan that is; at a little distance it looks exactly like Brussels lace. You put the muslin over the net, do you not?"

"Yes, grandmamma, and sew all round the pattern, and then cut out the muslin between. But I have been three weeks doing this half of it, I am so lazy, and it is so hot."

"You are never lazy, my love; but the weather is trying, as you say; see what an effect it has on poor dear Robert. The great heat always tried him, even when he was quite a little boy, it made him sleep badly, and then he would be restless and out of spirits the next day. I think, too, that there is something on his mind just now, although he does not complain of it."

"Perhaps so. I think I'll go up to my room for a little while, now that the sun is off that side of the house. Will you come, Gracie?"

"Presently," the twin answered; "I want to say a word to grandmamma first."

And as Grace Meadows left the room, the old lady rustled up to the twin, anxious to hear some news of the progress of Robert's suit—if suit it could be called. Once more Grace told her tale quickly, and "got it over."

"Last night I walked a little while in the garden with William Brooks, and he said that before I went to Deepdale he wanted to know whether I would consent, after a time, to be his wife. I have liked him very much ever since we were both quite children, and I told

him so. It was getting late, and he seemed not to wish to come upstairs again, so I said I would tell you myself. You do not see any objection to the engagement, do you, grandmamma?"

"No, no, except that I think you might have consulted me a little sooner. However, the Brooks are rich. I did not think you would have done so well. You must have a better black silk—two, I should say—and a more stylish crape bonnet; the one that you are wearing will do for country walks in Deepdale." She looked with new eyes at the twin, betrothed now to the son of a rich man like Mr. Brooks. "And now, if I could only know that Robert's little affair was going on well!" she added, piously joining her hands, as if she made upon the spot a liberal offer to Heaven of the remnant of her days.

But Providence did not appear to take kindly to the bargain, for Robert just then coming in, and glancing at the chair in which Grace Meadows had been sitting, exclaimed:

"So she's gone——" (here followed something that was not a blessing on the heiress), "and I suppose she's been telling you that she's made up her mind to throw me over."

"No," Mrs. Ashton answered in alarm, "she has said nothing of the kind. Why, how is this? Cannot Grace manage it for you?"

"Grace be ——" But Mrs. Ashton stopped him, for the twin was now a person of some consequence. "We can make allowance for your feelings," she said, "but do not be violent; let us hear the state of affairs."

"I'm not good enough for her, I suppose, or else she's got somebody else in her eye. Ask *her*," indicating his sister by a backward bend of his thumb.

"Explain what he alludes to, my love."

Grace was *distrait* for a moment; she was trying to recollect whether Mrs. Ashton had ever called her "my love" before. Then she briefly related the substance of her conversation with Grace Meadows. Mrs. Ashton reflected.

"I think," she said, presently, "that we have been a little too hasty in proposing the marriage, when Robert really has not begun to pay her the slightest attention. Let Robert begin from this very hour to behave to her like a suitor who is in real earnest, and after a time Grace must try again."

But Grace positively declined to try again, after the very explicit declaration of her cousin's sentiments, to which she had listened the night before, and she hastened to escape from the room, saying that she had done all she could, and that the subject distressed her. She did not feel safe till she had locked her door, and so placed a barrier, for the present, at least, between herself and the unknown something that she dreaded. Her thoughts flew, naturally, to William Brooks; she knew that he would help her in any emergency, and she half determined to refuse to go to Deepdale, and thus place herself at a distance from him. But again she recollected that it would appear selfish to decline to accompany Grace Meadows, that she might remain near her lover.

While she pondered over these things the schemers down-stairs discussed many plans—none of them very practicable ones—for bringing about the marriage that they desired. Mrs. Ashton was still of opinion that much might be done by Robert himself, if he would only practise

the gentle art of love-making; but Robert declared that he should only be making an ass of himself for nothing, and that some other way must be thought of. He asked some questions that suggested an unscrupulousness from which even Mrs. Ashton shrank; amongst other things, he wanted to know whether Grace Meadows could make a will, and was told that she could not do so for two years; he then asked to whom her property would revert, supposing that she died unmarried, before the age of twenty-one; but Mrs. Ashton explained that such an event would in no degree benefit him, and he sealed her information with a curse.

When the two girls came down-stairs, dressed for dinner, the pair were talking together in low and unusually earnest tones; the twin noticed them with something like an involuntary shudder, that agitated both mind and body, and when William Brooks made his appearance, later in the evening, he found her no longer intent on listening to the soft whispers of love and hope, but weighed down with a presentiment of coming evil, the nature of which she either could not or would not guess at. He was puzzled, and at first a good deal disappointed; but presently he remembered that her nature was sensitive and easily depressed, and he supposed that their newly-born happiness had awakened in her mind some degree of that mysterious fear that underlies the richest gifts of Fate. He thought, too, that she was looking ill, and would probably be the better for change of air, and he earnestly opposed her wistful suggestion that she might remain in London, and so be near him, instead of going to Deepdale.

IV.

GRACE MEADOWS' DREAM.

A VERY trifling circumstance which happened at this time contributed to place the ball at Robert's feet. Mrs. Ashton had decided that it would "look well" for the housemaid to accompany the two girls as their waiting-woman and special attendant, and arrangements had been made accordingly; but it happened that Robert, returning from a journey to the city in a very ill humour, protested in vigorous terms against this addition to the travelling party, and announced his intention of "cutting the whole concern" if another woman and her boxes had to be looked after. Mrs. Ashton, anxious to smoothe away his ill temper before Grace Meadows had an opportunity of observing it, hastily promised to give up the idea of sending a servant with them. After all it was not really necessary, and it was possible that the Renshaws might not be able conveniently to receive her; the dear girls were both so unassuming, and so very helpful, that really—and so on.

The twin, coming into the room at this moment, overheard the subject of discussion, and was instantly conscious of a strong and unaccountable desire to take the servant as one of their party. It seemed to herself that the instinct of fear prompted her to secure the girl's company—a strange instinct, surely, for the servant herself was giddy and thoughtless, like the average of girls of her age and station, and would have been a broken reed to depend upon in any emergency. Not the less earnestly, however, did Grace plead that she might still be permitted to go with them.

"We can make her useful in so many ways," she urged, "and on the

journey she will look after our boxes and her own, so that Robert will have less to do, instead of more."

"I won't have her," Robert doggedly repeated. "It's a hanged nuisance to have to go at all."

Shopping and packing filled up the next few days. The elder Grace was perpetually consulting a certain pocket-book of Russian leather, the gift of William Brooks, in which she kept lists of things to be bought, things to be packed, and general memoranda. Long afterwards William remembered having seen her, almost at the last, with this pocket-book in her hand; he remembered that the elastic band which secured it had been broken off, and that Grace had substituted a band of canvas, with her initials worked upon it. Grace heard no more of Robert's plans, and his silence oppressed her more than a knowledge of them would have done, for they were at this time unformed and impracticable. But Fate played into Robert's hands.

Grace was still pleading, with an earnestness that surprised herself, against the proposed change in their plans, when Grace Meadows came into the room, and Mrs. Ashton hastened to close the argument, and to prevent any further display of ill humour from Robert.

"I have been thinking, love, that perhaps you would not mind doing without Mary, as the Renshaws have plenty of servants. I know I shall feel a little lonely and nervous when you are gone, and I shrink from the idea of being left quite alone in the house, as I should be when Sarah went out, if you took Mary with you."

Grace Meadows looked surprised.

"Why, grandmamma, it was you who proposed that Mary should go with us. We are not used to anything in the way of a lady's-maid, and we do not want her at all; only I am sorry that you proposed it, for she will be so disappointed."

Mrs. Ashton promised to make amends to Mary for the disappointment, and went down to the kitchen to acquaint her with the change in their plans, before Grace could urge her point any further.

The last evening came, and William Brooks was invited to spend it with them; but the hours passed slowly, and the little party appeared to be ill at ease, from some unexplained reason. No one listened to Mrs. Ashton's platitudes about parting to meet again; Robert preserved a sullen silence, or answered, when spoken to, with a half-articulate growl; the twin was weighed down by forebodings that she could not exorcise or explain, and William Brooks watched her closely, feeling sure that she must be out of health, unless she had some cause for anxiety that she was concealing from him. Even Grace Meadows was grave and almost sad, in sympathy with the depressing influences that surrounded her, and it was almost a relief when the clock struck ten, and Mrs. Ashton advised the girls to retire early, to prepare, by a good night's rest, for the fatigues of the next day.

At that hint William Brooks rose to take leave, but he was quite determined to speak to Grace alone, though but for a moment; and at a whispered word from him she went down-stairs to open the door for him herself.

"What is the matter with you all?" he asked; "or rather, what is the matter with my little Gracie? She is either ill or sorrowful—which is it?"

"I am not ill," Grace answered, trying to smile, "but I do feel depressed and out of spirits; I am sorry to go away from you, you know."

"Yes; but that is not all," he insisted.

"No, it is not. The truth is, that I have been fretting partly about Robert's money matters: he has been imprudent and extravagant; very extravagant, I fear."

"Perhaps I can help him. I must have a long talk with him when you return, and see what I can do. Is that really all, Gracie?"

"No—not all. He is anxious to marry Grace Meadows, as you know, and she positively refuses even to think over what he wishes."

"It is better that she should positively refuse than that she should leave room for false hopes. They are very, *very* unsuited to each other, and marriage without love is a dreadful thing. You would not wish such a fate for either of them, dear?"

"No. But I wish that Robert would take his refusal, instead of making some plan to get her to change her mind, or—or——I don't know exactly what it is I fear, but it makes me miserable."

"You are nervous, Gracie, and not quite well, I think. If Robert had any plan of that kind on hand he would not be so dull and dejected as he is now; any one can see that matters have gone wrong with him, and that he is brooding over his defeat, instead of forming new plans and new hopes. And what plan could he possibly think of? Grace Meadows has a will of her own, has she not?"

"Yes; but I fear so many things, some that I cannot put in words, even to myself."

"You are nervous and low-spirited, that is about the truth. Is all your packing done?"

"Yes, all."

"That is well; now promise me not to sit up late, but to give yourself at least the chance of a good night's rest. You have not had good nights lately?"

Grace shook her head.

"I thought not, and now I know that you have been tormenting yourself with imaginary fears, and that your nervous system is unduly susceptible. Probably this visit to the Renshaws is about the best thing for you, especially if you go out every day, and interest yourself in your surroundings. Then when you return to London with a little stock of health and spirits I will make certain business arrangements that I have been contemplating, which will do away with any necessity for delaying our marriage. It will be better for us to marry soon, even with a smaller income than we might otherwise have started with. The atmosphere of your present home is not good for you, Gracie."

She mutely assented. It seemed to her excited fancy that a dream of love and hope lay stretched before her, like some fair and glittering scene in a panorama, that will prove to be mere delusion on a nearer approach; or like the mirage of the desert, that mocks the weary traveller with a semblance of wavy boughs and rippling water. She tried to speak cheerfully, but the words died upon her lips; Mrs. Ashton's voice was heard, calling for her up-stairs, and William Brooks hastily took leave, whispering last words of hope and courage.

"There is very little use in telling her not to fret," he soliloquised, as he walked towards a cab-stand; "she is not able at present to bear up

against these unreal fears and vague impressions of evil. There is generally some physical cause for so much mental depression, but in her case I really think that the inexplicable influence that cub of a brother has over her is at the root of the matter. Well, once let her come back from Deepdale, and she shall be taken altogether away from him; we could marry and be comfortable on—let me see——" His reflections were broken by the opportune appearance of an empty cab.

That night the twin, following the good advice that she had received, retired early, and tried to forget her forebodings in sleep. But for a long time her eyes refused to close; a suffocating dread seemed to oppress her, at last even with a sense of bodily discomfort, and it was long before the mists of coming sleep would spread their soft veil between her weary eyes and the outer world. She was on the border-land, where memory fades into a dream, when she was suddenly roused by a cry of distress, so sudden and piercing that in a moment she was wide awake, and hastily quitting her bed, she wrapped herself in a dressing-gown, uncertain whether the sound had been but the creation of her own fancy. But a door opened, and then another, showing that other inmates of the house had been roused, and soon she heard Mrs. Ashton demand, in a voice that quavered with fright, whether any one knew what was the matter.

The twin's first thought was for Grace Meadows, and she hastily glided down the passage that separated her room from her cousin's. She found Grace Meadows sitting up in bed with a scared and terrified expression, her eyes wide open, and her features at first almost unrecognisable from the new and strange expression stamped upon them—the expression, Grace afterwards said, of one who has just been face to face with some great horror.

"Was it you that cried out, dear?" she asked, trying to speak in a steady and reassuring tone.

"Did I cry out? I don't know that I did, but I have had a terrible fright. I was asleep, and not dreaming of anything, I believe, when all at once I was awakened by a feeling of suffocation, a struggle for breath——"

"Yes—and then?"

"Then I opened my eyes; the day was breaking, as you see, and I saw great billows of smoke rolling across the room, black, suffocating smoke, that swelled out towards me, and would not let me breathe; it wrapped round me, so that I could not even see the windows. There was a noise in my ears as of the hissing and crackling of burning wood, and all at once a tongue of fire leaped out of the smoke and blazed against my face. I could not even try to escape; my senses were failing me, but still some deadly fascination prompted me to fall *forward* into the smoke and flame, and that is all that I can remember."

She was interrupted by a tap at the door: the twin opened it, and found Mrs. Ashton, white and shivering, on the other side.

"Oh dear, what is it? What is it? Was it either of you that cried out?"

"Yes," the twin answered, "it was Grace Meadows; she had a dream, or an attack of nightmare, that is all, grandmamma." And with some difficulty she quieted the old lady, and persuaded her to return to her room.

Then she went back to Grace Meadows, who was becoming more

tranquil, though still under the influence of the dream or nightmare; she very carefully examined the room, but found no smell or vestige of smoke or fire. "It was a dream," she concluded.

"It was not a dream," Grace Meadows persisted. "People don't dream with their eyes open, do they? Oh, Gracie, don't go away from me—stay with me till it is time to get up."

The twin readily consented, and she tried to compose and quiet the terrified girl by repeating instances that she had read of or heard related, of the impressions produced by vivid dreaming being sustained for a moment after the dreamer had awakened. But when her steady voice and reassuring words had set Grace Meadows' fluttering heart at rest, then she began to ask whether her own reasoning had convinced herself, and she found that it had not. She did not believe that it had been a dream, but, on the other hand, she could not in the least account for it, or connect it in any way with the subject of her fears and forebodings. No real smoke or fire could have been in the room without leaving some evidence behind it; she did not believe it possible for a trick to have been played to frighten Grace Meadows; and even supposing that such a thing were feasible, she did not see that any object could be gained by simply frightening her. She came to no conclusion at all, except that in her heart she did not believe in the dream theory. Her eyes were heavy and sleep-laden when she was summoned to rise, and to see about the many last things that have to be attended to just before a journey. Grace Meadows was at first depressed and silent, but soon the bustle of preparation, and the prospect of the change, now so near at hand, restored her spirits to their natural level, and she laughed and talked as if no unreal terror had looked in upon her through the grey dawn of the morning.

"Now, Gracie, what are you packing up there? Sandwiches? What a provident old dear it is! As if there were not plenty of refreshment stations on the way. To be sure they give you the soup so hot that you cannot eat it, and hurry you back to your place before it begins to cool; if they do that to-day, I shall certainly take the soup with me, and eat it in the train."

"Out of your boot, perhaps," the twin suggested.

"No, out of their plate or basin; I shall leave it in the carriage, and they can look out for it when the train returns."

In this way Grace Meadows rattled on while the twin made her quiet preparations with a strange sinking at her heart.

When all was ready, and the luggage-laden cab stood at the door, Robert was nowhere to be found, and a hasty search through the house resulted in his being discovered in the dining-room, viciously gnawing at his nails. On being summoned to take his place in the cab, he first scowled at the servant, and then abruptly rose and strode towards the cab, in the front of which he seated himself without a word of farewell to Mrs. Ashton, who was lavishing tearful adieux on the two girls.

"He won't trust himself to say good-bye, poor dear," she whispered to Grace Meadows; "he prefers to get it over in silence."

Grace Meadows thought that she would have preferred to do so too; but at last she got away from Mrs. Ashton's wordy farewells, and proceeded to take her place in the cab—not an easy matter, for Robert had managed to take up nearly the whole of the front seat, and was using the back one as a footstool.

"Can you contrive to make room for me?" she asked, good humouredly.

Robert slowly turned his head and surveyed her with a scowl, but did not move. The situation was becoming embarrassing, when the twin, who had been busy up to the last moment, came to the cab, and set matters right by quietly displacing Robert's feet, and seating herself on the cushion that they had lately occupied. Then with a whispered word she induced him to make room on the front seat for Grace Meadows, who took her place beside him, well content to endure his bearishness, which seemed to assure her that he would not attempt any demonstrations of a lover-like nature. A long drive through monotonously hot and noisy streets brought them at last to the Euston-square station, where Robert swore at the porters, and thus fulfilled his mission of "seeing after the boxes." There was not an empty compartment in the train, and both the girls felt that the presence of fellow-travellers would be a relief; for Robert did not at any time possess the qualities which make a person companionable, and just now his depression showed itself in an amount of ill humour that was excessive, even for him. Their travelling companions consisted of a lady, a nurse, and a little girl, all bound for Rugby, and the child soon contrived to loosen the silent tongues of the grown-up people, Robert, of course, excepted. And as the rattling train bore them swiftly on, past yellow corn-fields and breezy downs, and parks and pastures, with their groups of plumy trees, Grace Meadows, herself a town-reared lassie, constantly called the attention of the twin to some new feature in the changing landscape; the "tame" English scenery, steeped in the light and glow of the English summer, seemed to her almost too beautiful to be real, as its varied features rushed swiftly past her, and melted into the green and golden distance. The day wore on, the little station of Burrowash was not far off, and Grace Meadows, looking at her watch, was confidently predicting a punctual arrival at Derby, when all at once the carriages began to sway from side to side, and the engine to utter hoarse and broken puffs. Just as the passengers were beginning to feel some degree of alarm, the movement of the train became perceptibly slower, and at last, by slow degrees, it stopped altogether.

The two girls, both at one window, anxiously inquired the cause of this interruption.

"Engine broke down, mum," laconically answered the guard.

In reply to the eager questionings of some nervous old ladies, the man further informed them that there was no danger, and that a messenger had been despatched to the station-master at Burrowash, who would send word to Derby that another engine was immediately wanted.

But it happened from some cause or another that the engine did not arrive until between three and four hours had wearily passed away; the traffic on that portion of the line was stopped, and everything was done to ensure the safety of the prisoners, so that, as Grace Meadows plaintively observed, they had not even the excitement of danger to keep their spirits up. At last the engine arrived, and they were taken into the Derby station at half-past nine instead of six o'clock.

And on that trifling accident the after-fate of more than one life depended.

ABOUT MATTER-OF-FACT PEOPLE.

READINGS OF CHARACTER.

By Francis Jacox.

Hazlitt numbers among his select samples of disagreeable people, a set of beings distinguished by what he calls a dry, husky, grating manner —a pettiness of detail—a tenaciousness of particulars, however trifling or unpleasant—a disposition to cavil—an aversion to enlarged and liberal views of things—in short, a hard, painful, unbending *matter-of-factness*, from which the spirit and effect are banished, and the letter only is attended to.*

> ——Who pore
> On the dead letter, miss the spirit of things;
> Whose truth is not a motion or a shape
> Instinct with vital functions, but a block
> Or wooden† image which themselves have made.‡

There are people, says Mr. Emerson, who can never understand a trope, or any second or expanded sense given to your words, or any humour; but remain literalists, after hearing the music, and poetry, and rhetoric, and wit, of seventy or eighty years. He pronounces them past the help of surgeon or clergy.§ Leigh Hunt supposes some such incurable to interrupt him when propounding a pleasant fancy of his, with the objection: "But the *fact* is otherwise;" and disposes of the objector by insisting on the *fact* of his positive satisfaction of the fancy, which it would take more facts than are in the possession of any mere "matter-of-fact man" to disprove. "Matter of fact and spirit of fact," urges the Seer, "must both be appreciated, in order to do justice to the riches of nature. . . . . Matter of fact is only the more palpable world, around which a thousand spirits of fact are playing, like angels in a picture."‖ Wise and witty Monsieur Joubert, dear to lovers of *Pensées*, declares it to be "réellement insupportable de converser avec les hommes qui n'ont, dans le cerveau, que des cases où tout est pris, et où rien d'extérieur ne peut entrer. Ayons le cœur et l'esprit hospitaliers,"¶ he genially exhorts. A *con*genial transatlantic essayist exhorts us not to make too much of flaws and occasional overstatements in conversation—some persons seeming to think that absolute truth, in the form of rigidly stated propositions, is all that conversation admits; which is precisely, says Dr. Holmes, as if a musician should insist on having nothing but perfect chords and simple melodies,—no diminished fifths, no flat-sevenths, no flourishes, on any account. The Autocrat of the Breakfast-table holds it fair to say, that, just as music must have all these, so conversation must have its partial

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* Hazlitt's Essays: On Disagreeable People.
† Waxen, *in orig.* Sit venia verbo.
‡ Wordsworth, The Prelude, book viii.
§ Conduct of Life, ch. iv.
‖ The Seer, No. vii., Essay on Windows.
¶ Pensées, Essais, Maximes, &c., de M. Joubert.

truths, its embellished truths, its exaggerated truths. "It is in its higher forms an artistic product, and admits the ideal element as much as pictures or statues. One man who is a little too literal can spoil the talk of a whole tableful of men of *esprit*."* Hartley Coleridge rather prided himself than otherwise on being most paradoxical when conversing with literal-minded, unimaginative, and therefore misapprehensive persons, with whom old-fashioned maxims have acquired the force of moral laws.†

Douglas Jerrold's Solomon Jericho is a matter-of-fact man with a moral and with a vengeance. "Talk to him of Jacob's ladder, and he would ask the number of the steps."‡ Another type we have in Mrs. Gore's Foreign Secretary, Mr. Votefilch, "essentially a practical man; one who regarded poetry as a mild species of insanity; quarrelled with the Woods and Forests, because they would not mend the roads with the ruins of Fotheringay Castle; and could perceive no irony in Hamlet's assignment of purpose to the ashes of Imperious Cæsar."§ For, against irony, as Professor Spalding observes,‖ that sharpest of all the weapons of wit, dulness of heart or fancy cases very many minds in armour of proof.

Charles Lamb professed to have been all his life trying to like Scotchmen, but obliged to desist from the experiment in despair, all on the ground of their matter-of-fact constitution, and the consequent "imperfect sympathy" betwixt him and them. You must speak upon the square with the Caledonian, was Elia's complaint: he stops a metaphor like a suspected person in an enemy's country. "A healthy book!" said a Scot to Elia, who had ventured to give that appellation to John Buncle,—"Did I catch rightly what you said? I have heard of a man in health, and of a healthy state of body, but I do not see how that epithet can be properly applied to a book." Above all, we are warned, "you must beware of indirect expressions before a Caledonian. Clap an extinguisher upon your irony, if you are unhappily blest with a vein of it. Remember you are upon your oath." And Elia relates with humorous resignation his going to a party of North Britons, where a son of Burns was expected, and how he chanced to "drop a silly expression," in his South British way, that he wished it were the father instead of the son—when

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* "Yes," you say, "but who wants to hear fanciful people's nonsense? Put the facts to it, and then see where it is!"

Currer Bell introduces such an objector in the person of Mrs. Pryor, who breaks in upon Shirley's rhapsody about mermaids with the mild query, "My dears, does it not strike you that the conversation for the last ten minutes has been rather fanciful?"

"But there is no harm in our fancies, is there, ma'am?"

"We are aware that mermaids do not exist: why speak of them as if they did? How can you find interest in speaking of a nonentity?"

"I don't know," said Shirley.—Shirley, ch. xiii.

Certainly, if a man is too fond of paradox,—the author of "Elsie Venner" advises,—if he is flighty and empty,—"stick a fact into him like a stiletto. But remember that talking is one of the fine arts,—the noblest, the most important, and the most difficult,—and that its fluent harmonies may be spoiled by the intrusion of a single harsh note."—Autocrat of the Breakfast-table, p. 57.

† See Hartley Coleridge's essay on Pride.

‡ A Man made of Money, ch. i.

§ Cecil, ch. iv.

‖ Treatise on Rhetoric, ch. i.

four of them started up at once to inform him, that "that was impossible, because he was dead."* Scotchmen themselves are fond of showing up the extravagances of taking things literally manifested by some of their countrymen. Dean Ramsay's volumes of Reminiscences abound with examples. Such as the Highland servant's literal compliance with his mistress's instructions, to show visitors into the drawing-room, "*Carry* [a Scotticism] any ladies that call up-stairs."† Or that other servant of an old maiden lady, who was under orders to go to Dr. Poole, of Edinburgh, every morning, to report the state of the lady's health, how she had slept, &c., with strict injunctions *always* to add, "with her compliments." At length, one morning the girl brought this message: "Miss S——'s compliments, and she dee'd last nicht at aicht o'clock."‡ The most literal, however, of North British servitors has his match in the Southron whose *gaucheries* had so annoyed Lady A. and her daughter—especially his persistent annunciation of them as the Right Honourable Lady A. and the Honourable Miss A.—that, taking him seriously to task, they desired him to mention them in future as simple Lady A. and plain Miss A. His obedience to the letter soon electrified Devonshire House by the intelligence that *Simple Lady A.* and *Plain Miss A.* were "coming up."§ But in some of these traditions, one is half inclined to suspect a twinkle of malice aforethought in the eye, presumably so fishy and stolid, of the offender, and enough sense of the fun of the thing to make them carry it out *usque ad absurdum*.

A stock story of matter-of-fact criticism is that of the Leicestershire clergyman in the instance of the "Rejected Addresses:" "I do not see why they should have been rejected," was the reverend gentleman's remark; "I think some of them very good."‖

At the time that "Gulliver" was in everybody's hands, Lord Scarborough, who was no inventor of stories, told Dr. Arbuthnot of his falling in company with a master of a ship, who told him he was very well acquainted with Gulliver, but that the printer had mistaken, for he lived in Wapping, and not in Rotherhithe. And Arbuthnot lent the book to an old gentleman, who went immediately to his map to search for Lilliput.¶ Swift was just the man to relish a jest of this kind. Practical jokes on matter-of-fact intellects were quite in his way. Wearied with the monotonous task of reading out Boyle's "Meditations" to Lady Berkeley, he composed his well-known burlesque, entitled "Meditations upon a Broomstick," which her ladyship is said to have listened to with the utmost gravity, as the veritable composition of the pious author aforesaid. The dean's publications at the expense of Partridge the almanack-maker, proving him dead despite the living man's earnest

* Essays of Elia: Imperfect Sympathies.

† "On the arrival of the first visitors, Donald was eager to show his strict attention to the mistress' orders. Two ladies came together, and Donald, seizing one in his arms, said to the other, 'Bide ye there till I come for ye,' and, in spite of her struggles and remonstrances, ushered the terrified visitor into Mrs. Campbell's presence in this unwonted fashion."—Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character, by Dean Ramsay, Second Series, p. 51.

‡ Ibid.

§ *Quarterly Review*, Oct., 1837. Art. on Manners and Etiquette.

‖ Preface to Rejected Addresses.

¶ Arbuthnot's Letters to Swift, Nov. 8, 1726.

asseverations to the contrary, are conceived in the like humour. Again, when Dr. King once told Swift that he thought his Rhapsody* the best satire he had ever composed, Swift assured the doctor that immediately after this poem was published he received a message of thanks from the whole * * *. Dr. King's cautious asterisks pretty plainly indicate the Royal Family. For he adds: "This I can easily conceive, as irony is not a figure in the German rhetoric. If Mr. Pope, when he calls Lord Cobham a coward, had complimented a German colonel with the same appellation, my little friend I fear would have fared but ill."†

When Byron, in the first canto of his master-satire, professed to have bribed "My Grandmother's Review,—the British," to eulogise his new poem, the learned editor allowed himself to be decoyed into what Moore calls the ineffable absurdity of taking the charge as serious; and in the succeeding number there accordingly appeared an indignant contradiction of it.‡ Byron exulted in the protest. "To be sure I took in the British Roberts finely," he writes to John Murray. "He fell precisely into the glaring trap laid for him. It was inconceivable how he could be so absurd as to think us serious with him."§ So had Shadwell bitterly resented as the worst affront of all, Dryden's representing him as an Irishman, in "Mac Flecknoe"—and took care, as Mr. Robert Bell says, to acquaint the public that he had never seen Ireland till he was three-and-twenty years old, and was there only four months; as if any one took the palpable ridicule of the satirist as matter of fact.‖

Sydney Smith tells of Francis Horner—all to his praise, barring a bit of a smile at his precision—that he loved truth so much, that he never could bear any jesting upon important subjects. One evening Sydney and Lord Dudley "pretended to justify the conduct of the government in stealing the Danish fleet; we carried on the argument," says the former, "with some wickedness against our graver friend; he could not stand it, but bolted indignantly out of the room; we flung up the sash, and, with loud peals of laughter, professed ourselves decided Scandinavians; we offered him not only the ships, but all the shot, powder, cordage, and even the biscuit, if he would come back: but nothing could turn him; he went home; and it took us a fortnight of serious behaviour before we were forgiven."¶ Even Mr. de Quincey—with all his zest for the humorous and his ready appreciation of a joke—almost as seriously resented once upon a time Charles Lamb's mischievously affected ridicule of Coleridge's ancient mariner.

Mr. Boyd** remembers, by the way, reading the "Ancient Mariner" once to a hard-headed lawyer, of no super-refined literary culture, who listened in a business-like way to the poem, and merely remarked that its author was a horrible fool.

But to Sydney Smith again. One day at a dinner-party, "in the full career of his spirits," he happened to say, that although he was not generally considered an illiberal man, yet he must confess he had one little weakness, one secret longing,—he should dearly love to roast a

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* "On Poetry: a Rhapsody." 1733.
† Dr. King's Anecdotes.
‡ Moore's Life of Byron, ch. xxxiv.
§ Byron to Murray, Oct. 8, 1820.
‖ Bell's edition of Dryden, ii. 25.
¶ Sydney Smith's Letter to Mr. Leonard Horner, Aug. 26, 1842.
** Leisure Hours in Town, by A. K. H. B., ch. ii.

Quaker. "Good Heavens, Mr. Smith!" exclaimed a horrified fellow-guest, "roast a Quaker?" "Yes, sir" (with the utmost gravity), "roast a Quaker." "But do you consider, Mr. Smith, the torture?" "Yes, sir, I have considered everything; it may be wrong, as you imply: the Quaker would undoubtedly suffer acutely; but every one has his tastes, mine would be to roast a Quaker: one would satisfy me, only one; but it is one of those peculiarities I have striven against in vain, and I hope you will pardon my weakness." Mr. ——'s honest simplicity, we are told, could stand this no longer, and he seemed hardly able to sit at the same board with the monster; and although the table was in a roar, neither that explosion, nor the mirth and mischief sparkling in the reverend jester's eye, enlightened Mr. —— in the least; so that at last, seeing that he was giving real pain, Sydney said, "Come, come, Mr. ——, since you think this so very illiberal, I must be wrong, and will give up my roasted Quaker rather than your esteem; let us drink wine together." Peace was made, but it is Lady Holland's* conviction that neither time nor explanation would have ever made Mr. —— comprehend that all this was a joke.

Nothing amused the perpetrator of it more, by his own account, than to observe the utter want of perception of a joke in some minds. A Mrs. Jackson was telling him of the oppressive heat of the week before, when he petrified her by exclaiming, "Heat, ma'am! it was so dreadful here, that I found there was nothing left for it but to take off my flesh and sit in my bones." "Take off your flesh and sit in your bones, sir! Oh, Mr. Smith! how could you do that?" "Nothing more easy, ma'am; come and see next time." But the lady ordered her carriage, and evidently thought it a very unorthodox proceeding.—"Miss ——, too, the other day, walking round the grounds at Combe Florey, exclaimed, 'Why do you chain up that fine Newfoundland dog, Mr. Smith?' 'Because he has a passion for breakfasting on parish boys.' 'Parish boys!' she exclaimed, 'does he really eat boys, Mr. Smith?' 'Yes, he devours them, buttons and all.' Her face of horror made me die of laughing."†

Amusement of the same kind, if not degree, he found in such another type of the matter-of-fact intellect as that of the York tradesman to whom he complained of the difficulty of driving along such straitened thoroughfares. "Why, Mr. Brown, your streets are the narrowest in Europe; there is not actually room for two carriages to pass." "Not room!" said the indignant Yorkist, "there's plenty of room, sir, and above an inch and a half to spare!"‡ But Sydney himself could play the matter-of-fact man on occasion; and he once found, or took, occasion to do so in the very figure of Mr. Brown of York, when a connoisseur in painting turned to him at Bowood, as he stood before a picture, and exclaimed, "Immense breadth of light and shade!" "Yes," replied Sydney, who was impatient of coxcombry in the fine arts, "yes;—about an inch and a half."§

Fiction, not unfrequently founded upon fact, delights in exposing the stolidity of your matter-of-fact minds. Fielding shows up Squire Western

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* Memoir of (her father) the Rev. Sydney Smith, vol. i. p. 146.
† Ibid., pp. 267 *sq.* ‡ Ibid., p. 111. § Ibid., p. 269.

taking things literally from the figurative mouth of his sister.* Sterne diverts himself with the French innkeeper's amended reading of *tant mieux* for the Sentimental Journalist's *tant pis*.† Sir Walter Scott makes Richie Moniplies, "with his solemn gravity, totally unapprehensive of a joke," an admirable subject for Jenkin Vincent's skill in the city, or cittish, accomplishments of bamboozling, cramming, hoaxing, humbugging, and quizzing.‡ Mr. Lister presents us with a pompous pattern of the matter-of-fact man in Sir Thomas Jermyn; as for instance on the occasion of Mr. Duncan's discoursing on the duty of a statesman's wife to save her husband all possible trouble, when that gentleman adds: "Nay, I do not know, if he were in Parliament, whether she should not even frank his letters." Sir Thomas looks extremely shocked. "Are you aware," he says, "that such an act would be felony? Felony by two acts of the last reign, and punishable by transportation for seven years?"§ Says the poet in one of Theodore Hook's novels, "I have had a respect for sheep-stealers ever since the days of Jason; the——" "Well," said Bucklersbury, "I cannot agree with you there, sir." "I speak of the Argonauts," continued the poet.—"Ah, sir," said Bucklersbury, "I don't mean to say a word against the family of the Arbuthnots. But I lived in the country as a boy, and I cannot justify to myself sheep-stealing in any shape whatsoever."‖ Of a like complexion is Mr. Shirley Brooks's Henry Wilmslow, who, when Lord Rookbury objurgated him for a rash signature to certain settlements, and hoped he was not "such a preposterous jackass as to go and sign in the dark," takes the matter literally, and replies, "No, it was not in the dark,—though, by the way, the light was not a very good one, being only a lamp with a shade to it."¶ There is no end to illustrations of this kind; so, of them, and in a summary sense, let there *be* an end at once.

Dean Ramsay's Reminiscences of Scottish Life and Character bear ample testimony to the existence of what he calls "that dry matter-of-fact view of things peculiar to some of our countrymen."** Scotchmen, indeed, with any perceptive and observant faculty about them, are no less prompt than South Britons to recognise what is, in effect, a recognised characteristic. It was on returning together from an interview with Coleridge at Highgate, in 1827, that Dr. Chalmers avowed to Edward Irving his dissatisfaction with the mystical obscurity of the philosopher's

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* For example, when the lady reproaches him, with regard to his treatment of Sophia, with seeming to know nothing of the relation between a father and daughter. "'Tis a lie," answered Western. "The girl is no such fool as to live eleven years old without knowing that she was her father's relation," &c. &c.—History of Tom Jones, ch. lxviii.

† "It was but last night, said the landlord, *qu'un mylord Anglais présentait un écu à la fille de chambre—Tant pis pour Mademoiselle Janatone*, said I.

"Now Janatone being the landlord's daughter, and the landlord supposing I was young in French, took the liberty to inform me I should not have said *tant pis*, but *tant mieux*. *Tant mieux toujours, Monsieur*, said he, when there is anything to be got—*tant pis*, when there is nothing. It comes to the same thing, said I.—*Pardonnez-moi*, said the landlord."— Sterne, A Sentimental Journey through France and Italy.

‡ Fortunes of Nigel. § Granby, ch. xlix.

‖ Gilbert Gurney, vol. ii. ch. i. ¶ Aspen Court, ch. xxviii.

** Reminiscences, First Series, p. 174.

conversation, and said that, for his part, he liked to see all sides of an idea before taking up with it. "Ah!" was Mr. Irving's reply, "you Scotchmen would handle an idea as a butcher handles an ox. For my part, I love to see an idea looming through the mist."* Imperfect Sympathies is the title of one of Elia's most characteristic essays, in which he ranks his own among those "imperfect intellects" whose constitution is essentially anti-Caledonian,—being rather suggestive than comprehensive. Little, however, he envies the opposite type, to which surmises, guesses, misgivings, half-intuitions, semi-consciousnesses, partial illuminations, dim instincts, embryo conceptions, are utterly unknown.

Of the two main disqualifications as a philosopher attributed by Mr. J. S. Mill to Jeremy Bentham, one is the incompleteness of his mind as a representative of universal human nature—in many of the strongest and most natural feelings of which he had no sympathy: "the faculty by which one mind understands a mind different from itself, and throws itself into the feelings of that other mind, was denied him by his deficiency of Imagination."† Lord Brougham tells us of Mr. Tierney, that everything refined he habitually rejected; partly as above his comprehension, partly as beneath his regard; and that he was wont to value the efforts of fancy still lower than the feats of subtilty; so that there was something extremely comical in witnessing the contrast of his homely and somewhat literal understanding, with the imaginative nature of Erskine, when they chanced to meet in conversation.‡ There must have been scope, occasionally, for some such interjection of remonstrance as the Ettrick Shepherd flings out at Mr. Tickler: "But what for spoil a feegurative expression? Never be critical in conversation, but accepp what's said—be't the sma'est triffle—frae a man o' genius; and be thankfu'."§ Even with associates who may have understanding, senses, wits, all on the alert, there may be perceptible, as a recent essayist remarks, a deficiency, a defective sympathy, which can only be defined as a want of common sense. The missing sympathy he desiderates, is of mind, not of heart, with which common sense need have nothing to do; yet, quite as much as sympathy of feeling, this intellectual sympathy he holds to be necessary to our full enjoyment of each other's society, as keeping us aware of our common nature and origin. In some higher world than our own, some planet nearer to the sun, he can imagine a race of beings better and wiser than ourselves, and fuller of benevolence; but "if they do not see things as we see them—if with them, for instance, two and two always make five—we could have no enjoyment of their company." In certain round games, the same writer goes on to say, the players are constantly pulled up by some arbitrary check to the sequence, called a stop. Now in conversation we are often led up to such a stop. "Our friend has betrayed a want; he has not seen the obvious, he has not caught what appeared to us the conspicuous and inevitable, points of the case; and so we have to begin again." And this is shown to be quite

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† See Dr. Hanna's Notes to Chalmers's Diary, May 10, 1827.
† Dissertations and Discussions, by J. S. Mill, vol. i. p. 353.
‡ Statesmen of Time of George III., vol. iii., "Mr. Tierney."
§ Noctes Ambrosianæ, iv. 218.

different from simply not understanding;* for people may not comprehend, and yet may betray no want of common sense; but there is what the essayist calls an "active intelligent deviation from the natural view of things, a dislocation of received views, a topsy-turvy estimate of relative importances, which shows us at once that there exists no common ground for discussion, and that it is useless to go on." Lord Bolingbroke, in one of his letters to Swift, remarking upon the incompatibility in company of certain noble friends ("Digbys and Harleys are absolute strangers to each other"), says that there is a sort of kindred in souls, who are divided into more families than we are apt to imagine: "Touch a unison, and all the unisons will give the same sound; but you may thrum a lute till your fingers are sore, and you will draw no sound out of a Jew's-harp."† Mr. Emerson is free to assert that as, when there is sympathy, there needs but one wise man in a company, and all are wise,—so a blockhead makes a blockhead of his companion. "Wonderful power to benumb possesses this brother."‡ A cruel form it sometimes takes in the withholding of a laugh at the "brother's" jokes; and then this benumbing power is very potent indeed. "A man is mortified," says Adam Smith, in his chapter on the pleasure of mutual sympathy, "when, after having endeavoured to divert the company, he looks round and sees that nobody laughs at his jests but himself."§ The Earl of Chesterfield made a point of snubbing those he accounted pert witlings, in this way. "I always," he tells his son, "put these pert jackanapeses out of countenance by looking extremely grave when they expect that I should laugh at their pleasantries; and by saying *Well and so;* as if they had not done, and that the sting were still to come."‖ In another letter his lordship observes, to the same purpose, that nothing makes a man look sillier than a pleasantry not relished or not understood; that if he meets with a profound silence where he expected a general applause, or, what is worse, if he is desired to explain the *bon mot*, his awkward and embarrassed situation is extreme.¶

Especially unintelligible to the purely masculine order of matter-of-fact minds is the purely feminine type of an opposite temperament. When women are sensible, says Currer Bell's sharp-voiced Rector,—and, above all, intelligible,—he can get on with them: it is only the vague, superfine sensations, and extremely wire-drawn notions, that put him about. "Let a woman ask me to give her an edible or a wearable—be the same a roc's egg or the breastplate of Aaron, a share of St. John's locusts and honey or the leathern girdle about his loins—I can, at least, understand the demand: but when they pine for they know not what—sympathy—sentiment—some of these indefinite abstractions—I can't do it: I don't know it; I haven't got it."**—Among the many valuable things known to the old Rockland physician, Dr. Kittredge, this is not accounted the least by Dr. Holmes, his author: that he knew what a nervous woman is,

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* See essay on Common Sense, in *Saturday Review*, vol. xvi.
† Bolingbroke to Swift, Jan. 1, 1722.
‡ Conduct of Life, essay vii.
§ Theory of Moral Sentiments, part i. ch. ii.
‖ Chesterfield to his Son, May 10, 1748.
¶ Idem, Oct. 29, 1748.
** Shirley, ch. xxiv.

and how to manage her: that he could tell at a glance when she is in that condition of unstable equilibrium in which a rough word is like a blow to her, and the touch of unmagnetised fingers reverses all her currents. For there are "vital symphonies in B flat, and other low, sad keys," which an ordinary doctor may know as little of as a hurdy-gurdy player of the essence of divine musical mysteries of Beethoven's or Mozart's.* Mr. Hawthorne makes a matter-of-fact picture-dealer interpret off-hand, by his own lights, the meaning of a transcendental artist's allegorical masterpiece; and adds this comment on the interpretation: "Thus coarsely does the world translate all finer griefs that meet its eye. It is more a coarse world than an unkind one."† The same writer is apt at delineating all such imperfect sympathies. Frequent in his pages are such examples as that of Owen Warland, the idealising artist, in contrast with his employer, the old watchmaker, Peter Hovenden. "There was nothing so antipodal to his [Owen's] nature as this man's cold, unimaginative sagacity, by contact with which everything was converted into a dream, except the densest matter of the physical world."‡ There is Mr. Lindsey, again, the father of Violet and Peony, in the story of the Snow-Image, "an excellent but exceedingly matter-of-fact sort of man, . . . sturdily accustomed to take what is called the common-sense view of all matters that came under his consideration." So we read on the first page of that allegory. And we read on the last, when the allegory has been worked out, and the drift of the snow (image) made plain, that after all there is no teaching anything to wise men of good Mr. Lindsey's stamp. They know everything—"everything that has been, and everything that is, and everything that, by any future possibility, can be. And should some phenomenon of nature or providence transcend their system, they will not recognise it, even if it come to pass under their very noses."§ Take again the acidulous-looking gentleman in blue glasses, whose strictures on the mystical panorama of a certain puppet-show evoke from the showman the remonstrance: "I am obliged to you, sir, for the candour of your remarks. Perhaps they are just. Human art has its limits, and we must now and then ask a little aid from the spectator's imagination." "You will get no such aid from mine," responds the critic: "I make it a point to see things exactly as they are."‖ Once more, there is the relation between a coarse-natured Westervelt and a too-sensitive Zenobia (in the Blithedale Romance),—involving the reflection, how many a woman's evil fate has yoked her with a man like this! "Nature thrusts some of us into the world miserably incomplete on the emotional side, with hardly any sensibilities except what pertain to us as animals."¶ Like Shelley's (not Wordsworth's) Peter Bell, who

> ——had as much imagination
> As a pint-pot;—he never could
> Fancy another situation,
> From which to dart his contemplation,
> Than that wherein he stood.**

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* See "Elsie Venner," ch. vii. † Transformation, ch. xxxvi.
‡ Mosses from the Old Manse: The Artist of the Beautiful.
§ The Snow-Image. ‖ Main-Street.
¶ The Blithedale Romance, ch. xii.
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CHRISTINE; OR, COMMON-PLACE PEOPLE.

BY JANET ROBERTSON.

XII.

It was now announced that the family at Ainslie Place were to set off for England in the beginning of June, and that Christine's lessons were to terminate at the end of May, when she should return to Seafield. The weather—as is often the case in Edinburgh at that season—although extremely bright, was dangerous from the prevalence of the easterly winds, and consequently a good deal of sickness pervaded the town. Among others who began to suffer was Lucy, who, after returning one day from a crowded exhibition of pictures, complained slightly of cold and sore-throat. As the chamber she occupied was on the same floor with the schoolroom and those of Caroline and Miss Wood, Mrs. Douglas desired her to keep up-stairs for a day or two, until she got free from her cold; so that she and Christine came more in contact than they had hitherto done since the latter had returned to the house. The insolence of Lucy's manner was inconceivable when left to her own devices. She never ceased her mocking and impertinence towards her uncomplaining companion, turning everything she said or did into a bitter kind of ridicule—that species of wit so generally resorted to by *les gens médiocres.* Miss Wood scarcely attempted to check her, or, if she did so, it was with a sly smile, which showed that she rather enjoyed than otherwise the malicious mode of annoyance. This petty display of tyranny, however, failed in disturbing Christine's equanimity of temper; she fastened herself down on the recollection of Mrs. M'Naughton's injunctions, and bore that patiently which she knew was so soon to end. It shook her nerves notwithstanding, and destroyed at the moment the pleasure she took in her pursuits, and although grieved to bid them farewell, yet she was almost glad when her singing- and guitar-masters took their leave, as they did, with many compliments on the great progress she had made under their care. The last lessons in French, Italian, and drawing alone remained to be given, then was to come her time of release and of her return to Seafield; and she sat down to write her weekly letter to Mrs. M'Naughton to announce the end of her studies, name the day of her departure, and likewise to report the flattering opinions of her music-masters. It was in the evening that she prepared for this pleasant duty, being glad to employ herself in some silent occupation to escape from the sarcasms and mimicry of Lucy, who, with a burning cheek and flashing eye, had attacked her so violently during tea as to agitate her in an unusual manner. Christine had mentally sought to excuse her more than usual bitterness by the charitable supposition that her increasing cold had aggravated her ill temper, being likewise in some sort disposed to sympathy by feeling her own throat becoming stiff and uncomfortable; yet the virulence of the girl had been so excessive that her nerves were considerably shaken, and when she began to write, the letters she formed seemed to dance before her eyes. In vain she attempted to go on with

her letter; she was seized with a degree of giddiness that quite overpowered her, and when from time to time she sought to relieve the sensation by raising her head, the inflamed countenance of Lucy sitting opposite, glaring at her with an expression of hatred, had a frightful and unnatural appearance.

"Miss Wood," she at length ventured to say, "I feel very unwell, and should like to go to bed."

"Go, go," hissed out Lucy, with a fiendish expression, from the other side of the table—"go, Mistress Accomplishment, and I am sure I hope you may never come back."

Christine shuddered and tried to rise, but the moment she got upon her feet everything seemed to reel round with her, and she sank, half fainting, on the floor. Lucy sprang up likewise, and, running round the table, advanced towards her with a wild look of malignant triumph, and spurned the nearly insensible girl with her foot.

"For shame! for shame!" called out Miss Wood, hastening towards them, at the same time seizing her by the hand to drag her away. "Heavens!" she exclaimed, at the moment she did so, "Miss Lucy, you are in a burning fever!" And in a panic she rushed towards the bell, and rang loudly for assistance.

Christine was immediately undressed and put to bed, and Lucy, almost delirious, was consigned to hers. The doctor was immediately sent for, and on his arrival pronounced both girls to be seized with the scarlet fever, then raging in the town. Mrs. Douglas was not only much dismayed, besides being disgusted that so plebeian a malady as an infectious fever should have dared to invade her aristocratic family, but was also extremely frightened lest the contagion should attack the other members of the household. She immediately sent for regular sick nurses to attend the invalids, made Caroline go down-stairs to sleep in Rachel's apartment, and by break of day despatched her husband to Portobello in order to secure a house into which to remove Miss Wood and the elder young ladies without loss of time. As it was her great aim to appear a pattern woman in everything, she decided to remain in Ainslie Place, taking, however, all possible precautions to preserve herself from infection, keeping with her only her own maid and the cook, whilst she sent the other servants to Portobello. It was likewise settled that Mr. Douglas was to divide his time between both houses, without exposing himself by going near the invalids.

Christine became worse through the night; the fever increased, accompanied by an excruciating sore-throat, and towards morning she could not swallow at all. Lucy, on the contrary, did not suffer so much at first from the quinsy, although her fever was very high; and owing to her physical forces being great, she did not become so much exhausted as her feebler companion. The succeeding week both girls became alarmingly ill; the fever gaining ground upon Lucy, while Christine's throat grew so much worse that she could not swallow the cooling draughts which were necessary to reduce the malady. During this time she was carefully attended by a kind and respectable nurse, who generally stayed in her chamber, except at stated times when she descended to the schoolroom to take her hurried meals, or to relieve for a few minutes a similar attendant who watched constantly beside Lucy. The doctor paid

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Christine a visit every day, and with him regularly came Mrs. Douglas—*en* pattern woman—to hear how he thought the patient was progressing. But the little girl had another visitor in her sufferings, of whom nobody but the nurse was aware, and whose constant attendance was a source of as much pleasure as the poor child was capable of receiving. This pleasant visitor was neither more nor less than a young, pretty, brown cat, who having effected an entrance by means of a skylight left open to afford circulation of air, had taken refuge in Christine's chamber, often coming into her bed, and purring as if she thought to soothe the helpless invalid. The nurse, who liked animals, always brought her up a little food and milk, and let her go out of the skylight to amuse herself in the daytime, but in the evening the creature never failed to return, and used to play a thousand gambols about the room before betaking herself to the foot of the sick child's bed, who used occasionally to put out her wasted hand to give her a little stroke when she came purring towards her. One thing, however, attracted the attention of the invalid, whose mind possessed a singular degree of activity even in extreme bodily pain. She observed that whenever Mrs. Douglas's step was heard approaching, pussy invariably leaped upon the floor and concealed herself below the bed, as if she had an instinctive perception that an enemy was at hand, and during the few minutes that she and the doctor remained in the room she never by any chance showed herself.

At last the abscess in Christine's throat burst, and relieved her in some degree from the acute agony she had so long endured, but leaving her in so great a state of weakness that the nurse became alarmed at her utter prostration of strength. The day that this crisis occurred the doctor had been early to see her and Lucy, with whom the malady had not yet reached its height, and was to return at night in consequence of the uneasiness he felt about both.

On the evening of that day the exhausted Christine lay more dead than alive, following with a heavy glance the movements of the cat as she glided about the room or brushed past the knees of the nurse, who sat rubbing her face with laudanum to relieve a pain in her cheek. About ten at night the doctor's step was heard approaching, accompanied, as usual, by Mrs. Douglas, to whom he was in the act of speaking in a low voice; and the girl, as she lay on her left side, languidly looking out of her bed, saw their faces as they entered reflected in a large dressing-glass which stood at the end of the room. Her attention was sufficiently awake to enable her instantly to perceive that the medical attendant was more than usually grave, and that Mrs. Douglas looked proportionably disturbed, and when the nurse advanced to meet them at the doorway, and whispered that "the young leddy was sae spent she could hardly turn in her bed," she quite clearly discerned that the worthy old man became more anxious and perturbed in aspect. She then heard Mrs. Douglas tell the woman that she was required in Lucy's apartment to assist the other nurse in fomenting her throat, which was now assuming a very alarming appearance, and the doctor, after giving her some directions about the said fomentation, advanced to take his usual seat beside Christine's bed, regarding the patient little sufferer with infinite attention and interest. He became even graver than before when he felt her pulse faintly fluttering under his fingers, and then proceeded

to look into her throat; he grew more reassured, however, after this investigation, but when he spoke to her she was reduced to such a state of debility as scarcely to be able to articulate, and continued to keep her eyes fast shut that she might not see the face of Mrs. Douglas, who stood at a little distance watching the expression of the medical man's countenance in an anxious and strange manner. After a minute's pause he rose to go away, and as he reached the foot of the bed the child again unclosed her eyes, and fixed them on the mirror. At the moment she did this she heard Mrs. Douglas say, in a whisper:

"She is evidently sinking. I fear you think her dying."

"Dying, madam! Oh! not at all. The crisis is past; the only thing now to be dreaded is her extreme weakness. If she does not sleep to-night—which is possible, from the continued agitation of her nerves—she may, perhaps, sink, but if, as I expect, she rests tranquilly, she will be by to-morrow morning in a fair way of recovery."

Poor Christine's ear was not more struck, and her spirits reassured, by those words than her eye was attracted by the singular expression which gradually settled on the lady's face, as reflected in the mirror, during the time the old gentleman went on speaking, in a louder voice:

"To ensure her repose, however, you must give her ten drops of laudanum to-night, to act as a sedative to the system; but you must be careful not to administer a larger dose, for she appears so completely exhausted at present that the least inaccuracy in giving more might have fatal consequences—she might never awake." Then, after a pause, he continued, in a lower and desponding tone: "I am much more uneasy about Miss Lucy, whose constitution, although stronger, has a much greater tendency to inflammation. I shall step into her room again as I go down, to see how she is after the fomentation."

So saying, he left the apartment, leaving Mrs. Douglas standing in such a position as still to enable the reviving Christine to see her face distinctly in the mirror. The expression of her countenance was so singular and sinister as to rivet irresistibly the child's attention; she remained motionless for a moment, looking down on the ground, with her forefinger on her lip, and her brows fearfully contracted; then she advanced hastily towards a table where stood some barley-water, and, pouring a little into a glass, she seized the phial of laudanum which the nurse had been using, and emptied, with no sparing hand, a great part of its contents into the drink. She then approached the child as she lay motionless in her bed, and leaning down over her, passed her arm under her neck, raising her head in a position to enable her to swallow as she held the fatal draught to her lips, saying in a hurried whisper, as she did so,

"Drink, Christine; the doctor has ordered you to take this before you go to sleep."

The child's mind was filled with a horrible idea; she shuddered, faintly struggled, and tried to avert her head in declining it.

"Take it," urged the unnatural woman, in a hoarse, low tone, while her cheek became livid, and her eyes seemed starting out of her head—"swallow it this instant, or I shall force it down your throat."

The poor little girl felt that there was no resource.

"God have mercy upon me!" she faintly whispered. "But oh! don't

force me. I shall take it of myself." And she stretched forth her emaciated hand to grasp the glass.

As she did so, she raised her piteous eyes for a moment to the face that bent over her, and encountered a gaze so fixed and deadly as never afterwards to be forgotten. Her feeble fingers held the glass unsteadily, and she was just in the act of approaching it to her pallid and quivering lips, when suddenly the cat, from some incomprehensible impulse, sprang on the bed, and dashed it from her hand on the floor, then stepping forward with a loud pur, rubbed her whiskered face upon Christine's wasted cheek. Had an angel from heaven appeared instead of a brown cat, Mrs. Douglas could not have been more thunderstruck. So severe was the shock on her guilty nerves, that she actually let the rescued child fall back from her arm on the pillow; then, as she became aware of the real state of the case, the whole blood of her body seemed to mount to her head, rendering her face of a muddy red-purplish colour, and it is possible that another moment's revulsion might have produced fatal consequences, but fortunately both for pussy and Christine, the nurse's cough was heard as she ascended the stairs, and the dangerous and terror-struck woman escaped from the room a moment before she entered it.

The doctor had repeated his orders to the nurse about administering the ten drops of laudanum on going down-stairs; so, immediately upon coming in, she advanced towards the table to prepare the draught as he had directed, but upon taking up the phial, Christine heard her ejaculate to herself, "Save and protect us! wha's ta'en a' the laudamer?" Then she approached the bed, looking about everywhere with surprise, and perceiving the liquid and broken glass on the carpet, concluded that some accident had happened in which it had been spilt, which likewise accounted for the unusually strong odour which filled the room. Sufficient, however, remained in the phial for the dose prescribed, and carefully dropping the quantity she had been ordered into a cooling mixture, she administered the draught to the now unshrinking invalid, and had soon the satisfaction of seeing her sink into the refreshing slumber anticipated by the doctor.

In the morning, when Christine awakened, the recollection of the scene of the preceding night recurred to her mind as soon as she opened her eyes, and beheld the tell-tale mirror opposite; but the great amendment she experienced in health made it appear more like the remembrance of a feverish dream than anything that had really happened. There, however, also lay pussy on her bed with her paws folded under her, and purring away as she regarded Christine with an urbane look—which, in a human being, might have been considered indicative of the tranquillity of a good conscience after having performed some remarkably magnanimous act. All that day passed in peace, and with a decided improvement in health and strength; but when the doctor paid his usual visit no Mrs. Douglas accompanied him—"she was," he told the nurse, "engaged with Miss Lucy down-stairs, who was very ill indeed." Several days rolled on, and Christine was able to get up a little, and was soon so much better as to dispense with the nurse's attendance for hours together, her aid being now required for Mrs. Douglas's maid, who had caught the infection, and was alarmingly ill.

Nearly a fortnight after this time, the convalescent girl had been up

during the whole day, amusing herself with her books and work, and the nurse, after having brought in her dinner, went down-stairs as usual to her duty beside the new invalid, leaving Christine playing with the cat, who, now that she was out of bed and moving about, scarcely ever left her. Suddenly she heard a strange bustle on the floor below, with the voices of people speaking confusedly, mixed with shriller tones, as of some one weeping. She rose, opened the door to listen, and not being able to imagine what was the matter, leaned over the rails to try and ascertain; then perceiving Mrs. Malcolm—her own nurse—pass hastily along the lobby and enter Lucy's room, she began noiselessly to descend the stairs in order to wait for her coming out again, to ask her what the commotion meant. On reaching the landing-place, she saw that the door of Lucy's chamber was wide open, and different people moving about inside; but as she did not perceive Mrs. Douglas among them, and felt faint from an undefinable sensation of alarm which occasioned a dread of remaining longer by herself, she crept towards it and entered. What a sight met her eyes! There, on the bed at one end of the room, lay the body of Lucy, stiff and dead! The insolent, the violent, the hard-hearted girl was, indeed, no more! As the doctor had feared, the malady ultimately ended in a putrid sore-throat, which had at the last cut her off sharply and suddenly. Christine, unnoticed by any one present but Mrs. Malcolm, who was engaged about the corpse, sank into a chair, which happened to be close beside the door, and gazed with horror on the spectacle before her. Near the bed, in an arm-chair, sat Mrs. Douglas, with her husband bending over her on one side, and Lucy's nurse on the other, with a glass of wine on a silver salver, which, from time to time, she offered to the bereaved mother, only to be refused. The pattern woman was trying hard for a fit of hysterics, kicking with her feet, and waving her hands about, but with no genuine demonstration of grief, such as a parent might naturally be expected to feel on so awful an occasion. Her husband's countenance expressed real emotion, but his sorrow for the dead child was dominated by his interest in the living wife, who, in every circumstance, and on all occasions, still reigned the paramount object of his thoughts and affections. Suddenly a new actor appeared on the scene, in the person of the butler from Portobello, who, entering the apartment and holding another silver salver with a note on it, advanced towards his master and presented it to him. Mr. Douglas could not forget his dignity even in moments the most trying, so he waved his head haughtily and majestically, motioning the man away, saying, as he did so,

"Not now, not now; afterwards, in the drawing-room."

The butler seemed breathless and agitated.

"But, sir," he stammered out, "it is from Miss Douglas; it is very important. I was ordered not to lose a moment in delivering it into your own hands."

His master grew pale as death.

"From Rachel!" he ejaculated; "and sent, too, at a moment when she knew we thought her sister was dying! Then something must be wrong."

He snatched the note from the salver, hurried with it to the window of the half-darkened room, and, turning his face towards his wife, tore it open and glanced hastily over it. In an instant his countenance changed

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"But, sir," he stammered out, "it is from Miss Douglas; it is very important. I was ordered not to lose a moment in delivering it into your own hands."

His master grew pale as death.

"From Rachel!" he ejaculated; "and sent, too, at a moment when she knew we thought her sister was dying! Then something must be wrong."

He snatched the note from the salver, hurried with it to the window of the half-darkened room, and, turning his face towards his wife, tore it open and glanced hastily over it. In an instant his countenance changed

to a frightful expression of anger, he crushed up the paper convulsively between his hands, and stamping wildly on the ground, whilst every haggard feature quivered with rage, he muttered hoarsely between his clenched teeth, "Curse her! curse her!"

Mrs. Douglas, meanwhile, had ceased "trying at hysterics" on the entrance of the butler, and had followed her husband's motions with an anxious and fixed attention. On seeing the change in the expression of his face, and on hearing the appalling imprecation burst from his lips, she rose from her seat pale as a spectre, advanced towards him, and laying her hand on his arm:

"What is it, John?" she asked, gazing at him fearfully.

He fixed his eyes on her with an inexpressible look of agony and indignation.

"Our daughter Caroline," he answered, "has eloped—eloped with a married man."

Mrs. Douglas fell on the floor as if shot. The woman so remorseless, so devoid of conscience towards any one who in the least interfered with her interest or vanity; the mother who could see her young daughter expire in agony before her eyes without experiencing any *real* feeling of sorrow, was at last struck where only she was vulnerable—in her *pride*—and she sank beneath the blow. Husband and attendants all hastened to raise her from the ground.

"To her room—to her room!" groaned out the miserable man. And bearing the still insensible form in his arms, he moved towards the door, and, with the assistance of the women present, proceeded to descend the stairs to carry her to her own apartment, leaving the paralysed Christine sitting alone in the chamber of death.

With one hurried glance at the inanimate form before her, which could insult and tyrannise over her no more, and a deep gasp to renew the respiration which seemed for some moments to have become suspended, the horror-struck girl raised herself from the seat on which she had remained motionless during the dreadful scene that had passed before her, and with some difficulty gained the stairs, where, by the help of the banisters, she contrived to drag herself up to the higher story, and breathlessly reached her room; upon entering which, she tottered towards her bed, sank upon her knees, and prayed long, deeply, and fervently. This was the first moment of her life in which the pure light of religion streamed in upon her hitherto harassed and benighted spirit. She now felt how insufficient we are to ourselves, without receiving aid from a higher source; how transient and fleeting is life even to those who seem to possess all the requisites to embellish and secure it; and how vital the importance of resting our hopes on another world, in order to be able to steer a guiltless course through the storms and temptations of this. She rose from her knees fortified and strengthened both mentally and physically. The trials and difficulties that surrounded her own devious course seemed now comparatively light.

"I will rest all my hopes in God," she kept repeating to herself. "I shall try to do my duty towards my fellow-creatures, and if I die young, like Lucy, I shall at least endeavour to do so in peace and hope; and if I live, I shall not, like Caroline, occasion horror and disgrace to any one, however poor and joyless my situation in life may be."

Soon after, Mrs. Malcolm hurriedly entered the room.

"My puir lassie," she said, "what brocht ye doon the stair? Yon was nae scene for a young thing like you to see. 'Pride goeth before a fall,' saith the wise man, an' its fa'en wi' a vengeance here; but gang to your bed, my bairn, an' try to sleep, an' I'll bide in the room the nicht, as the ither nurse is to sit beside Betty, for I'm fairly dune out, an' canna thole mair."

So saying, she proceeded to undress Christine, and having given her some tea and fairly laid her down, she prepared her own bed on the sofa, and after closing the window-shutters and door, and stroking pussy, composed herself to take the rest she so much required.

XIII.

A DIFFERENT scene, meanwhile, was passing in Mrs. Douglas's room. Laid in her magnificent bed in her elegant night-dress and lace-frilled cap, it was in vain *she* sought repose; sleep fled far from her pillow, and she turned and turned with a feverish restlessness, while the wind, as if in accompaniment to her tempestuous thoughts, kept roaring round the house in such a manner as is only to be heard in the highly situated and exposed capital of Scotland. At last, twelve o'clock was heard striking in the town, mixed with the cannonading of the storm, and the noise of a carriage stopping at the door. She sat up in bed and listened eagerly; a minute after, Mr. Douglas entered the room, his countenance pallid and worn, whilst the traces of disorder in his general appearance might naturally have led any one—unacquainted with the preceding events—to have supposed that he laboured under a fit of mental aberration. He fixed his haggard eyes wildly on his wife, as he took the little hand that lay on the coverlid and pressed it convulsively between his own, without being able to articulate a word.

"Dishonoured for ever?" she muttered, interrogatively.

"For ever!" he answered, in a choking tone—"infamous creature!"

She excitedly pursued: "Where, when, how has she contrived to elude our observation and watchfulness, so far as to plunge herself and family into such irremediable, such irretrievable disgrace?"

"Since she has been from under the shelter of our roof," he replied, endeavouring, but in vain, to speak calmly; "all has come about in the few weeks she has been left to her own devices at that hateful place. The villain who has ruined her is the major of the dragoon regiment now at Piershill Barracks, and it is supposed that he had made advances to her in meeting her on the road or on the sands, for she was always walking out alone, or with that artful jade, Miss Wood, who, Rachel supposes, must have connived at the affair from the beginning; for her maid says that she often heard them talking confidentially at night, and laughing immoderately while turning us all into ridicule, particularly our eldest daughter—who never goes out, you know, but in a carriage; and it is the more probable, as the confidante had got Rachel to pay her salary but the day before yesterday, and immediately took herself off to a friend's house, upon hearing that the worthless wretch had fled. I drove there before I returned to the town, and walked in upon her to upbraid her for her unprincipled conduct, but she was as bold as brass, telling me that we

could expect nothing else from the unnatural manner in which we brought up our children, and that we might be glad if the mischief ended here. I was almost tempted to strike her," he added, with a frightful violence of expression, "but with a great effort I refrained, and told her that I would ruin her by preventing any one receiving such a viper into their house; and the impudent hussy laughed, and replied that she was sorry that she could not benefit by my good intentions, as she had been engaged for some time past to a distinguished Irish family just going abroad, being quite wearied of her life in our uncomfortable and artificial household."

Mrs. Douglas sank back on her pillow, and covered her face with her hands.

"John," she said, at last, in a whisper, "send away that girl."

"Who?" asked he, gazing at her with surprise and terror, as if he feared that her mind wandered.

"Your sister," she added, still more faintly; "she is a bird of evil omen! All kinds of mischief and misfortune have happened to us since she entered our house. Frederick's frenzied extravagance, Guy's violence and defiance, Lucy's death, and this dreadful disgrace. I cannot endure again to meet her under my roof; the very sight of her would curdle my blood."

"As you please, dearest Bessy," answered the yielding and obsequious husband; "but where can we send her at present, without the risk you so much dread? It is only to-day that I received a letter from my aunt, telling me that, whenever she could be moved, she would expect her back, and if she were not able to return in a few days, that she would come into town to see how she was, for that she had no fear of infection; 'and besides,' she added, in her strange satirical way, 'it was well known that old women never died when their deaths were wished for.'"

"Let her go, then," muttered Mrs. Douglas; "anywhere but here for the present."

"Compose yourself, Bessy," gently urged her husband, seeing she shivered all over. "Let me give you some laudanum to make you sleep."

"Laudanum!" she repeated, starting up and glaring at him wildly. "Do you mock me?" Then suddenly recollecting herself, "No, thank you," she added, "I shall try to rest without it."

She lay back again on her pillow and closed her eyes, breathing heavily, and sighing from time to time, as if oppressed with some great weight. Mr. Douglas sat beside the bed watching her with much attention and tenderness, until he was convinced that at last she slept, and continued for some time listening with wonder and anxious interest to the half-articulated names and words which occasionally broke from her pallid and feverish lips.

"Frederick, Guy, Caroline, Lucy—all," she murmured—"all to punish me!" After a pause, she added, more disturbedly, "No laudanum, no laudanum, for it was that—it was that—and *this* is retribution."

Then she started, and woke to see her husband anxiously watching—what he believed to be—the signs of illness, but perfectly unsuspicious

that those broken sentences indicated anything else than a shaken mind, in consequence of grief and over-excitement.

It was about one o'clock on the following day, when Mrs. M'Naughton was sitting, plunged in thought, beside her fire, that the well-known carriage drove up to the door. Mr. Douglas alighted, and a minute afterwards appeared before her. The old lady rose from her seat—a thing she generally never did to visitors—and gazed at him as he entered the room with a keen and disturbed glance.

"What is the matter, John?" she exclaimed, vehemently—"what is the matter? You are the messenger of death; is it so indeed?"

"I am," he answered, shuddering as he spoke; "and, still worse than that, my good aunt, I am likewise the messenger of disgrace."

Mrs. M'Naughton slowly reseated herself, looking at him fixedly as she did so, and with an expression of fearful expectation, but without saying a word, only motioning him into a chair opposite to her.

"We have lost Lucy." The old lady started, but a close observer might have discerned an instantaneous relaxation in the tension of her features. "The fever ended in putrid sore-throat"—his lips quivered—"and she died—died yesterday evening, about eight o'clock."

"Poor thing!" sympathisingly ejaculated his usually stern relative; "but be comforted, nephew, her troubles are over; she is well removed from a world of sorrow and trial."

Mr. Douglas drew a deep breath.

"She is well removed, indeed, my dear aunt," he observed, whilst tears involuntarily filled his eyes. "It would have been better that others had died equally young and sinless."

The old lady looked at him inquiringly, and with much interest, but refrained from urging him for an explanation until he had nerve to go on of himself. He drew his chair closer to hers.

"My dear aunt," he continued, "I have a much more dreadful piece of intelligence to communicate, the disgrace of our respectable and well brought-up family." This was his wife's favourite expression, in her own case so fearfully misapplied. "Caroline," he went on—"our beauti[ful] and carefully educated Caroline, has left us, has eloped from her fam[ily], and has gone abroad—it is believed—under the protection of a marr[ied] man."

Mrs. M'Naughton grew grim and rigid-looking.

"Eloped with a married man!" she exclaimed, fixing her eyes on h[er] nephew, as if she doubted the evidence of her senses; "how could su[ch] a circumstance have possibly occurred in a family so *well brought up*[?]"

There was a slight inflection of ridicule in the tone in which she r[e]peated the favourite expression. Mr. Douglas, apparently, did n[ot] observe it, but went on relating all the circumstances he knew, as he h[ad] already announced them to his wife. The stern old woman sat up stif[f] in her chair, rapping the floor with her foot more loudly than usual, n[ot] said one word to interrupt him until he had finished, but by the e[x]pression of her countenance it might easily be discovered that she w[as] both shocked and chafed.

"This is indeed dreadful!" she at length observed, when he ceas[ed] speaking—"this is indeed unspeakable depravity; to have fallen [in] love even—with the husband of another woman—one might imagine, f[or]

in youth the heart is unguarded, and the passions strong, and I have no doubt that there may have been much to extenuate and account for the madness; but to rush headlong into levity and vice at the moment when her young sister was lying on her death-bed, is the damning circumstance, and it will be the one to condemn her both here and hereafter."

Mr. Douglas opened his eyes with amazement, for it was the infatuation of her conduct as to its disgraceful consequences—not its heartlessness—which had struck home both to him and his wife, and he was astonished when he found the subject taken up in another point of view, by one whose firm code of morality had always been considered as strict as her family pride was great.

"Think no more of her," she continued; "dismiss her from your minds, and leave her to the punishment which sooner or later must overtake one who has no natural affection to supply the place of want of principle or judgment."

This was so entirely different from the tone in which his wife and he had treated the affair, that Mr. Douglas—never very comprehensive—felt completely at a loss how to follow his aunt's ideas; he therefore rose to go away.

"You want to have Christine back?" he said; "and as it is the doctor's opinion that she may now be moved without danger, if to-morrow is convenient to you, we shall send her out in the carriage with the nurse who attended her in her illness, and who will return in it, after having consigned her charge to your care. After poor Lucy's funeral is over, we shall set off without delay to England, for my beloved wife is sadly shaken with all that has taken place, and we must try, by change of scene, to amuse her thoughts, till time and religion have schooled her well-regulated mind, and brought her back to her usual resignation to the will of God. She has no strength or courage to see any one before her departure, so she desired me to give you her kindest regards, and to say that it is only the complete prostration she experiences, both mentally and physically, that prevents her coming out to seek consolation in your sympathy, but that her heart is with you, as she hopes your good wishes are with her."

So saying, with something of his usual assumption of dignity, Mr. Douglas extended his hand to his old relative, and bidding her a pompous farewell, he left the house to return to Edinburgh.

"Lucy dead, and that hussy Caroline gone off with a married man!" recapitulated Mrs. M'Naughton, when left alone. "Truly the proud woman has commenced a severe apprenticeship to grief and humiliation; but Christine is coming back, clever, kind-hearted little Christine! Poor young thing! if *she* had died, I should never have forgiven myself in having been so far worked upon by the misrepresentations of those selfish people as to have reproached her with being the daughter of her silly mother. I am glad her plants have thriven so well, and I shall go and see that her room is nicely cleaned out, and have a fire put into it, that it may be well aired before her return."

Next day, about the same hour that Mr. Douglas had paid his painful visit, the carriage again drove up to the door, and looking out of the window appeared the pale but joyous face of Christine, wearing a night-cap under her bonnet, and otherwise much wrapped up. In another minute she was before her aunt, and came in, as usual, carrying some-

thing; but this time it proved to be neither flower-pots nor a guitar, but a pretty brown cat, which she held fast in her arms by means of a red morocco collar, which she had stitched round its neck. Christine covered it with her shawl on entering, and advanced, with a look of joy, towards the old lady, who received her with a warm embrace.

"Are you glad to come back, child?" she asked, with a great expression of complacency.

"Oh! very glad, aunt," replied the poor girl, with a bright smile of pleasure; "but I am afraid that you will be very angry with me, for I have brought a cat!"

"A cat!" repeated Mrs. M'Naughton, with astonishment. "What tempted you to bring a nasty creature to dirty all the house and torment everybody?"

Christine looked frightened, and turned her large eyes upon Mrs. Malcolm, who had followed her into the room.

"You see, mem," said the good-natured woman, coming willingly to the rescue, "the puir thing cam' in at the skylight whan Miss Christy was ill, an' aye keepit in her room, an' was a great diversion whan she could do naithing to amuse hirsel'; an' whan the family gang awa, there wad be naebody to tak' care o' it, an' it wad be starved to death; sae the young leddy thought it wad but be Christian-like to bring it out here, an' let it rin about the house an' kill the mice; an' gif you did nae like to keep it, she thought that maybe some o' the cottar-folk micht tak' it aff your hands;"—"the cottar folk" being a bright thought of the worthy Mrs. Malcolm's, got up for the use of the moment with genuine Scotch shrewdness.

"Very well—very well, my good woman," said Mrs. M'Naughton, with unusual urbanity; "perhaps it may be as well to have a cat, as the mice *are* very troublesome; so go up-stairs to your room, child, and take it with you. You will find a nice fire burning, and it will be better for you to remain there all day and keep yourself warm, for fear of taking cold."

Off went Christine with pussy, to whom she gave liberty as soon as she found herself alone, after having bid Mrs. Malcolm farewell. With what pleasure she looked round her when left to the quiet possession of her old quarters! Tears of relief and delight streamed down her cheeks. "Here she was anchored at last, for the old lady had told her that she should not again leave her, and everybody said that Mrs. M'Naughton never broke a word once pledged."

At night, when the old lady retired to her room, she paused for an instant at the door, contemplating with pleasure the little bed now no longer vacant. She then softly approached it, and, on looking in, beheld Christine lying with her eyes wide open.

"What! not yet asleep, child?" she said. "What keeps you awake so late?"

"Oh! I am so very, very happy," answered the guileless girl, drawing the sheet up upon her face till her long thick eyelashes rested on the snowy linen like the wings of a little bird.

"Go to sleep," replied Mrs. M'Naughton, turning away with a smile. "Innocent child!" she continued to herself, while preparing for repose; "how very little she requires to make her happy!"

It is impossible to imagine the comfort that Christine's return imparted to her old friend; everything seemed to wear a new face. It had not been her fate to know the joys of maternity; she had never had young people in the house with her before, so that the society of the gentle gifted creature thus strangely thrown upon her hands seemed in her sombre existence like a ray of light illuminating a gloomy cavern. It must be owned, however, that if Christine had been a vulgar-minded or even a common-place girl, the effect would have been a very different one with the singularly tempered old woman; but with all her plainness, peculiarity, and penuriousness, still there was much mental power, great firmness of principle, acuteness of observation, blended with a profound contempt for meanness or deceit, respect for real worth, and admiration of talent. She studied Christine on her return with keen attention, in order to ascertain if any latent vanity had been kindled in her mind by the extraordinary progress she had made in those branches of education which she had been cultivating, but she could discover none. With the little girl's singular capacity was combined the most perfect simplicity, and the shrewd analyser said to herself that *there* lay the proof of her decided genius. She questioned her on the conduct of her relatives towards her. The child told simply how she had been situated, but made no observations. When the old lady touched upon Caroline's elopement, she turned pale and shuddered; when she mentioned Lucy, she burst into tears, and sobbingly told her about having gone downstairs and seeing her lying dead, but not one word did she mention of her conduct towards her either before or on the evening she was taken ill; all unkindness was cancelled in Christine's generous mind, and she only thought of her as of the youthful blooming girl laid low in her cold dark grave. Not a syllable escaped her lips of the dreadful scene that had taken place in the chamber of death, and the circumstance of the dose of laudanum was not only confined to her own bosom, but she even endeavoured to persuade herself that the state of exhaustion she had been in at the time had created some strange hallucination of ideas that had deceived her. She therefore tried to banish the subject from her mind, but still it would occasionally recur in her dreams, and the circumstance led to a degree of fondness for the cat that more than made it a rival to the memories of Oscar, Donald, and Cripple Liltie.

Mrs. M'Naughton pondered over many things as she sat in her dining-room beside the green boughs that, instead of the fire, now filled the grate in the warm weather. She knew much more than Christine suspected, for she had questioned the nurse when left alone with her on the day of her arrival, and Mrs. Malcolm, with the instinctive perception which a mind of a certain force always has of another similarly gifted, however different the sphere of life, had fully and confidentially told her all that had passed in the house during the time she had been there, and much that she understood had gone on before she became an inmate of it. Servants are very apt to consider as judgments the misfortunes that befal masters and mistresses who are disliked, so the painful circumstances that had occurred in the Douglas family had freely opened the sluices of domestic information, and the tide of gossip had flowed forth embellished with every variety of commentary. Mrs. M'Naughton therefore knew that Christine had witnessed the appalling

scene which had taken place in Lucy's chamber when the news of Caroline's elopement arrived, and the nurse told her how "the douce young lassie had sat as quiet as a mouse an' never spoke, though she was as pale as death, and seemed ready to faint wi' fricht, an' that she never said a word about it after, which was an uncommon thing in a young cratur like her; but, indeed, Miss Christy was a bairn by the common, for a' the servants said that though she was quite negleckit in the hoos, yet she never seemed sulky or complained, but sat up the stair wi' that licht-heeded cutty Miss Wud, either busy wi' her lessons or singing like a mavis, an' never quarrelled wi' Miss Lucy wha aye flew upon her whane'er she could get out her spite."

Of the higher thoughts and convictions by which Christine was actuated her humble friend could not judge. She only knew the general effect, and simply and fairly stated it to Mrs. M'Naughton, without touching much upon Mr. and Mrs. Douglas, with whom she had come but little in contact.

A very short time renewed the invalid's strength, and her general health—as is often the case after a fever—got much more vigorous; she grew rapidly, however, and lost for a while her redundant fair hair, but her cheeks and lips acquired a brighter tint, and her eyes beamed more clearly and brilliantly than ever. Mrs. M'Naughton, who had never possessed any personal advantages, was, like most other plain people, a great admirer of beauty, so she watched Christine's improving looks with immense pleasure, mingled with a degree of wonder, and was more than ever in the habit of listening to her singing, which from day to day became more delicious. Her guitar-playing—now perfected by the first-rate instructions she had received—was a subject of real astonishment to her secret auditor; for, by a singular caprice, she never asked her to perform before her, but preferred sitting with the dining-room door open, that she might hear her in the distance, when, unfettered by restraint, she sang all the changes of her musical mood as prompted by the inspiration of the moment.

About this time the old lady took a singular fit of extravagance—she actually bought a little open four-wheeled carriage, with a stout galloway pony to draw it; she began to feel her strength declining, and found it necessary to have some conveyance in which to visit her fields and work-people at a distance. At first it was one of her farm-servants who drove her, but one day she was seized with the idea of getting Christine to act as coachman, and sent her out with the man to take a lesson in the art. Like most other things of the kind, this was an active accomplishment of which the girl already had acquired some knowledge in the course of her desultory pursuits at Broombank, where the good-natured Mr. M'Intosh had often entrusted the reins to her childish hand for a little distance, and under his own superintendence, when going anywhere in his gig. It was, therefore, nothing more than renewing a well-remembered exercise; and on coming back, Christine assured her aunt that she could drive her quite well, and that besides, Cobby the pony—for whom she had already conceived a great friendship—was so good, and so willing, that a mere child might manage him, not to mention a girl at the respectable age of thirteen. Mrs. M'Naughton was delighted with this intelligence, as she not only preferred having Christine as her companion

instead of Peter, but as it likewise left the man at liberty to pursue his usual occupations on the farm. Every day, therefore, when the weather permitted, did she sally forth in her little carriage with her youthful and beautiful charioteer; and after having driven to her fields to inspect the work going on, stepping out and in, as it suited the rough tracts and her convenience, they ended in taking an airing along one of the roads in the neighbourhood. This regular out-of-door exercise was of great benefit to the old lady's health: it soothed her nerves, tranquillised her spirits, and procured her sound and refreshing sleep; while Christine's cheek brightened more and more under the influence of the fresh summer breeze, and her voice acquired additional power and richness.

Meanwhile, Mr. and Mrs. Douglas and Rachel were in England, trying to forget, in the midst of wealthy and aristocratic connexions, the disgrace that had fallen on the family in consequence of Caroline's unprincipled conduct, for any grief felt for Lucy's death was very quickly forgotten. Mrs. M'Naughton was regularly favoured with epistles, either from her nephew or his wife, and was informed by them that Caroline and her seducer, Major Gascoigne, had gone abroad—as at first supposed—where she had figured as his wife in various gay scenes and circles, but had as often been obliged to quit when accidentally the truth came to be known. Mrs. M'Naughton remarked, however, that both parents dwelt more on the admiration that their daughter's personal appearance was said to excite than on the moral delinquency she had committed. "Vanity! vanity!" the old lady repeated to herself on reading those passages—"always the same egotistical and wretched vanity!" And she smiled with contempt when—as it occasionally occurred in the course of their letters—it was *prudently* observed that to indemnify poor Rachel for the disadvantages to which her sister's misconduct had subjected her, it would be necessary to give her a certain proportion of wealth, in order to secure her an alliance in the higher ranks of life, where, from unfortunate circumstances like Caroline's infatuation more frequently occurring, they were less thought of than in the middle classes of society. "Ay," pursued Mrs. M'Naughton to herself, "give her a large fortune with which to catch a sprig of nobility. We shall see what will come of that. But, after all, it may be as well, for I have no idea that Rachel would ever be married from disinterested motives; she is too like her mother to be loved for herself, and there is only one John Douglas in the world to be made a dupe of. My nephew has six thousand a year at least, independent of the fifty thousand pounds which go to his family at my death, so he can well afford to give this only remaining daughter a good round sum, or one of his estates, to secure her admission into some noble family, in order to enable her to play the great lady in a small way."

The old aunt was at the moment completely ignorant that Frederick's reckless conduct seemed to threaten the whole family with ruin as far as the unentailed property went; and, selfish like the rest, he cared but little for the embarrassments he occasioned to others, being secure of succeeding himself to a clear three thousand a year at his father's death.

THE KNIGHT OF SCHÖNFELDT.

A TALE OF THE TIMES OF LUTHER.

I.

On the banks of the river Saal, in Merseburg, forming part of Saxony, at the time of which we speak governed by the aged and excellent Elector Frederick, stood the Castle of Schönfeldt. It was one of those feudal piles of the middle ages, impregnable to the engines of ancient warfare, but which were destined to crumble before the iron shots with which cannon assailed them, as the system they represented was compelled to succumb to the light of that truth which the Gospel was then diffusing over a considerable portion of Europe.

Ulrich, Knight of Schönfeldt, sat in a room in his castle, with his arm resting on a table and a book before him, at which, however, his eyes seldom glanced; his looks were thoughtful and full of care. He had engaged in much hard fighting in his younger days, and now all he wished for was rest and quiet, though the state of the times gave him but little hope of enjoying them. In his own mind, too, he was troubled about many things. Four years before the time at which he is introduced to the reader, he had visited Worms, during the time the Diet, summoned by the Emperor Charles V., was sitting, and was among those who found their way into the great hall, where the emperor, and the chief princes, bishops, and nobles of the land were sitting, when Dr. Martin Luther had replied to the chancellor of Treves, the orator of the Diet, who demanded whether he would retract the opinions put forth in numerous books he had published and sermons he had preached.

"Since your most serene majesty and your high mightinesses require from me a clear, simple, and precise answer, I will give you one, and it is this: I cannot submit my fate either to the Pope or to the councils, because it is clear as the day that they have frequently erred and contradicted each other. Unless, therefore, I am convinced by the testimony of Scripture or by the clearest reasoning, unless I am persuaded by means of the passages I have quoted, and unless they thus render my conscience bound by the Word of God, *I cannot and will not retract*, for it is unsafe for a Christian to speak against his conscience." And then looking round on that assembly before which he stood, and which held his life in its hands, he said, "HERE I STAND, I CAN DO NO OTHER. MAY GOD HELP ME! AMEN!"

The assembly were thunderstruck. Many of the princes found it difficult to conceal their admiration; even the emperor exclaimed, "This monk speaks with an intrepid heart and unshaken courage." True he did. This is the weakness of God, which is stronger than man. God had brought together these kings and these prelates publicly to confound their wisdom. These bold words had had also a deep effect on the Knight of Schönfeldt, and he kept meditating on them as he rode homeward towards the north. Could it, then, be possible that the lowly monk —the peasant's son—should be right, and all those great persons, who wished to condemn him, wrong? Was that faith, in which he himself

had been brought up, not the true one? Was there a purer and a better? He must consult Father Nicholas Keller, his confessor, and hear what he had to say on the subject. The knight carried out his intention. Father Nicholas was puzzled; scarcely knew what answer to make. It was a dreadful thing to differ with the Church—to rebel against the Pope. Dr. Martin was a learned man, but he opined that he was following too closely in the steps of John Huss, and the knight, his patron, knew that they led to the stake. He had no wish that any one under his spiritual charge should go there. As to the Scriptures, he had read but very small portions of them, and he could not tell how far Dr. Martin's opinions were formed from them. The knight was not satisfied. He asked Father Nicholas to explain what was the Church, and if it was not founded on the Scriptures on what was it founded? Father Nicholas replied that it was founded on Peter, and that the Popes were Peter's successors, and that therefore the Church was founded on the Pope. The knight remarked that from what he had heard of Peter he must have been a very different sort of person to Leo X., and he asked what we knew about Peter, and indeed the other apostles, except through the Scriptures? Father Nicholas, shaking his head at so preposterous a question, replied, "Through tradition." The knight asked, "What is tradition?" Father Nicholas hesitated—coughed—hummed—and then said, "My son, tradition—is tradition! And now let us change the subject, it is becoming dangerous." The knight was not yet satisfied, and he determined to look more particularly into the matter. When, therefore, his son Erick came home, and expressed a strong desire to migrate to Wittemburg, that he might pursue his studies under the learned professors of that university, Drs. Martin Luther, Melancthon, Jerome Schurff, Jonas Armsdorff, Augustin Schurff, and others, he made no objection. His wife, however, and Father Nicholas loudly protested against Erick's going among such a nest of heretics.

"He will be perverted," they exclaimed; "he will share the fate of Huss."

"I have promised him that he shall have his will, and perhaps he will be able to come back and tell us the meaning of tradition," answered the knight, with a peculiar look at Father Nicholas. "There are, besides, two or three other things about which I want him to gain information for me."

So Erick went to Wittemburg. Some time before this, Dr. Luther had escaped from the Castle of Wartburg, where he had been concealed by orders of the Elector Frederick, for nearly a year after leaving Worms, to preserve him from the rage of his defeated enemies, and had returned to Wittemburg, where his presence had been much required. Erick had been there for several months, when one day a man with a large pack on his back presented himself at the castle gate, and demanded to see the knight. He was admitted.

"Well, friend, what would you with me?" asked the knight.

"I have books to sell, and will show them to you forthwith," answered the colporteur, unslinging his pack. "Here is one lately printed—worth its weight in gold, and more."

The knight took it. It bore the simple title—"THE NEW TESTAMENT. GERMAN. WITTEMBURG."

"That is the very book I do want," exclaimed the knight, eagerly. "Yes, I doubt not that it is worth its weight in gold. By whom has it been done into German?"

"By Dr. Martin Luther," answered the colporteur. "He began the work when shut up in the Wartburg, and has only lately finished it with the help of Dr. Melancthon. Here are some other works by him. Will you take them?"

"Yes, three—four—one copy of each. There is payment," said the knight, laying down some gold pieces.

"I take but the proper price," answered the colporteur, returning most of them to him.

"You are an honest man," said the knight. "If the books you sell have made you so, they must be good."

"The books certainly are good, and I am more honest than I was. Once I ate the bread of idleness, indulged in sloth, and was of no use to any one. Now I labour for my food, and try to obey my Lord and Master," answered the colporteur.

"Why, what were you?" asked the knight.

"A monk," answered the colporteur; "a lazy, idle monk. Dr. Luther's books came among us, and we read them, and some of my more learned brethren translated the Testament to us who were ignorant of Greek, and we agreed that as Jesus Christ came into the world to set us an example as well as to die for our sins, and that as He ever went about doing good, our system of life could not be the right one. The more we looked into the matter, the more satisfied we became that it was altogether opposed to the Gospel, and so we resolved forthwith to leave it. Some who had the gift of preaching went forth to preach the Gospel; others have begun to learn trades that they may support themselves; and, as I have a good broad pair of shoulders, I offered to carry throughout our fatherland the Gospel book and other works of Dr. Luther, which had proved so great a blessing to our souls; and though I cannot preach, I can go about and tell people that through God's love Christ died for all men, that there is but one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ; and that men will be saved, not by dead works, but by a living faith in Him, which will produce fruits unto righteousness, an earnest desire to imitate Him, to serve Him, to spread these glad tidings among all mankind."

"It seems to me, in my humble wisdom, that you did right," observed the knight. "However, do not tell Father Nicholas this, if you meet him. Whenever you return this way, call here and bring me more books."

"Gladly; and I shall have some portions in German of the Old Testament, on translating which Dr. Luther is hard at work," said the colporteur.

"By what name shall I remember you, friend?" asked the knight.

"John Muntz is my proper name, bookseller and labourer in Christ's service," answered the colporteur, as he bade the knight farewell.

Sturdy, honest John Muntz went his way throughout the land, selling Luther's and Melancthon's books, with the New Testament and such parts of the Old as they issued from the press, sometimes reading their contents, sometimes telling to single persons or small assemblies, in simple lan-

guage, of the glorious old truths thus brought once more to light. It may be, in the great day, that many far-famed preachers will be surprised to find that humble John Muntz, and other labourers such as he in the Lord's vineyard, have turned more souls into the way of righteousness than they.

The Knight of Schönfeldt took his books into his own room and locked them up, that he might read them at leisure. He was not prepared just then to enter into a controversy with Father Nicholas, and he wished for quiet. He knew that his good wife and his daughter Laneta would take the part of the priest, and he had an idea that when Erick came back from Wittemburg he would prove a valuable ally on his side. Now and then, however, as he read on he felt very much inclined to rush down and proclaim, not only to his wife and the priest, but to the whole household and neighbourhood, the wonderful truths here so clearly proved and explained. But though he rose from his seat with the book in his hand and opened the door, he went back and sat down again. Though brave as a lion in war, and often impetuous at home, he was still timid in his own household. His womenkind and Father Nicholas had found out his weak point, and knew where to assail him.

The knight had always wished to act rightly according to his convictions, consequently when some few years before this time—that is, long before he paid the visit to Worms, where he first heard Dr. Luther speak—he had been urged by Father Nicholas and his wife to allow his youngest daughter, Ava, to become, as they called it, the spouse of Christ, or, in other words, to enter a nunnery; she raising no objection, he consented, believing, as he had been assured, that her eternal happiness would thus be secured, and that she would be better provided for than becoming the wife of one of the rough, fierce, warlike, beer-drinking knights who alone were likely to seek her hand. The knight, however, often sighed as he thought of his fair blooming little Ava shut up in the monastery of Nimptsch, and wished to have her back again to sing and talk to him and to cheer his heart with her bright presence, but he dared not express his feelings to any of his family, as he knew that they would be considered rank heresy. Often he would have liked to write to his dear child, but, in the first place, he was but a poor scribe, and in the second, he guessed that any epistle he might send would be opened by the lady superior, and its contents scanned before delivered, and adverse comments made, if it was not withheld altogether. So little Ava stayed on at the convent, embroidering priests' dresses and other ornaments for churches, and attended mass. Whether or not she ever felt like a wild bird shut up in a cage wishing to be free, he could not say; he thought it possible. She was wont once to go about the castle singing like a bright happy bird, not shut up in a cage then. He wondered whether she sang now. He was sure that the nun's dress could not become her as the bright-coloured bodice and skirt she wore. He wondered, too, whether she ever went out now, as she was accustomed to do when at home among the cottagers in the neighbourhood with a basket of food and simples, and distributed them to the sick and needy with gentle words which won their hearts, or whether when mendicants came to the gate she stopped and listened to their tales of suffering, relieved them when she could, and seldom failed to drop a tear of sympathy for their

griefs, which went like balm to the hearts of many. He opined that the high-born ladies of the monastery of Nimptsch would scarcely condescend thus to employ their time. They undoubtedly were brides of Christ, but, as the lady abbess had once remarked, it was the business of His more humble spouses to imitate His example in that manner. After the knight had been thinking in this style, when he descended into the hall he was invariably accused of being sullen and out of temper. Not that he had any fault to find with his good frau Margaret, or with his daughter Laneta. They were excellent, pious women in their way. They had embroidered five altar-cloths, seven robes of silk for the Virgin Mary, and three for St. Perpetua, St. Agatha, and St. Anne; they had performed several severe penances for somewhat trifling faults; not a piece of meat had passed their lips during Lent; and they had fasted on each Friday and other canonical days throughout the year. Alms they gave whenever they could get money from the knight for the purpose, and doles of bread to the poor with stated regularity; indeed, they felt sure that they would richly have merited Heaven even with a less amount of good deeds. Still they were desirous of making security doubly secure.

When, therefore, in the year 1517, that is, before Ava went to the convent, Dr. John Tetzel, prior of the Dominicans, apostolic commissary and inquisitor, set up his pulpit and booth in the neighbouring village for the sale of indulgences, they had been among the crowds who had flocked to his market. Near him was erected a tall red cross, with the arms of the Pope suspended from it.

"Indulgences, dear friends," he exclaimed, when he saw a large mob collected round him, "are the most precious and noble of God's gifts. See this cross; it has as much efficacy as the cross of Christ. Come, and I will give you letters, all properly sealed, by which even the sins which you intend to commit may be pardoned. I would not change my privileges for those of St. Peter in heaven, for I have saved more souls by my indulgences than the apostle by his sermons. There is no sin so great that an indulgence cannot remit; only pay, pay well, and all will be forgiven. Only think, for a florin you may introduce into Paradise not a vile coin, but an immortal soul, without its running any risk. But more than this, indulgences avail not only for the living, but for the dead. For that repentance is not even necessary. Priest! noble! merchant! wife! youth! maiden! do you not hear your parents and your other friends who are dead, and who cry from the bottom of the abyss, 'We are suffering horrible torments! A trifling alms would deliver us; you can give it, and you will not.'" Then Tetzel had told them how St. Peter and St. Paul's bodies were rotting at Rome because the Pope, pious as he was, could not afford to build a proper edifice to shelter them from the weather without their help. "Bring—bring—bring!" he shouted, in conclusion.

Dame Margaret and her daughters were greatly moved by these appeals, though little Ava thought the monk need not have shouted so loudly. The dame, who had just before persuaded her lord to give her a good sum of money, bought a large supply of indulgences not only for herself and daughters but for the knight, who, she secretly believed, required them far more than they did, because he never performed penances,

made quick work at confession, and regularly grumbled on fast days; besides, she could not tell of what sins he might have been guilty in his youth. She did not tell him what she had done, but she felt much more happy than before to think that they would now all go to heaven together. She would even, in her zeal, have made further purchases had not Father Nicholas expostulated with her, observing that it would be much better if she paid the money to enable him to say masses, which would prove quite as efficacious, and, besides, be spent in Germany instead of going to Rome. She was greatly horrified some time after this to hear the knight inveigh furiously against Tetzel and his indulgences, and call him an arch rogue and impostor. Of course on this she did not tell him how she had spent his money, lest he might make some unpleasant reflections on the subject; besides, she suspected that he would not appreciate the advantages she had secured for him. But this was after Ava had been sent away to Nimptsch.

II.

Erick with a friend, whom he introduced as Albert von Otten, arrived unexpectedly one day, to the knight's very great satisfaction. The knight embraced his son affectionately.

"I have a great many questions to ask and difficulties for you to solve, my son," he said, as he beckoned him to come to his room.

"And I, father, have very many things to say to you, so that we shall have plenty to talk about. Albert will, in the mean time, entertain my mother and Laneta."

"And now, Erick, what do you think of this Dr. Luther?" asked the knight, after he had looked along the passage which led to his room and locked the door.

"Think, father! That he has brought light out of darkness—that he has made the boldest stand that ever man has done against the power, the tyranny, the impositions of the Pope, and the superstitions which he and his predecessors have ever encouraged for the sake of filling their pockets, utterly regardless of the souls they led away from Christ and salvation," exclaimed Erick, warming as he proceeded. "He has done and he is doing a glorious work, and though his foes were to burn him to-morrow they could not extinguish the light he has kindled. He teaches that man is by nature sinful and alienated from God, but that God so loved the world that he sent His son to become a sacrifice for man's sins, to suffer instead of man, and thus to enable him through repentance and faith in that sacrifice to be reconciled to Himself; that Christ is the only mediator between God and man; that neither His mother Mary nor the saints have anything to do in the matter; that they required His sacrifice as much as others, and that therefore fasts, penances, invocation of saints, masses for the dead, purgatory, indulgences, are all the inventions of the popes to put money into their pockets, or into the pockets of the priests, their supporters, or of the devil, to lead souls astray."

"I heartily agree with him, Erick. See, I have read something about the matter already," said the knight, going to the oak chest in which he kept his treasures, and bringing out the Testament and some of Dr.

Luther's works. "I never found myself a bit the better for fasts or penances, whenever I thought that I ought for my sins to endure them; and, as for indulgences, I felt very much inclined to kick that scoundrel, Tetzel, out of the place when I heard that he had come to sell them in this neighbourhood. Now, tell me, does your friend Albert von Otten preach? He looks as if he had the gift of speech."

"Indeed he does," said Erick. "He has the power of moving the hearts of his hearers."

"Then he shall preach in our church next Sunday, and to all in this castle as well, in spite of what Father Nicholas may say to the contrary!" exclaimed the knight. "I have long wanted you, Erick, to take Father Nicholas in hand; you may be able to convince him and your mother too—she is a good woman, but bigoted and obstinate, begging her pardon, and I should have had no peace if I had ever begun, unless I had come off the conqueror at once. Albert von Otten will help you."

Erick gladly undertook the task. It was the chief object he had had in view since he had himself been converted to the truth. He immediately broke ground. His mother and Laneta were very much astonished at his doctrine, but they would not acknowledge that he was right. Father Nicholas had scarcely a word to say in return, so he put on the stolid look of a schoolboy brought up unwillingly to receive a lecture.

"Young men's dreams," he muttered, "or devices of Satan to draw men from the true Church. Ah, the Bible is, as I always said, a dangerous book. Little did those who wrote it dream what mischief it would cause in the world."

The minds of the whole household were much agitated by the subjects of which Erick and his friend spoke to them. Still more so was the knight himself, when, the following day, the colporteur, John Muntz, presented himself at the gate, and, demanding to see him, put into his hand a letter from his own little daughter Ava. He read it over and over again, and his countenance beamed with satisfaction. He immediately called Erick to him, ordering refreshment to be brought in the mean time for John Muntz in the hall, and desiring him to talk to his people and to sell any of his books that he could. Ava, after sending greeting to him and her mother, and love and duty, continued:

"And now, dear father, I must tell you that I cannot longer endure this life. It was only while I believed that I was doing God service that I loved it. Now I am certain that it is directly contrary to His law. I have read the New Testament carefully with prayer, and I can find nothing there to sanction it. We are told not to bow down to images—not to use vain repetitions in prayer; we are employed the greater part of each day in doing those two things. We invoke dead saints, we worship the Virgin Mary, we fast, we perform penances to merit heaven, and all the time the Bible tells us that there is but one mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ, and that by repentance and through faith in Him can we alone become righteous and meet to enter the kingdom of heaven. I cannot tell you one-half of the objections I have to remaining here. There are also eight other nuns who desire to leave, and they have written to their parents to the same effect, though some of them tremble as to what will be the answers; others say that there was so much grief when they went away, that they are certain that there

will be rejoicing to get them back. I know how sorry you, and mother, and Laneta were when I left home, that I have no doubt that you will be glad to have me return. But how are we to get away?—there is the difficulty. We know that we are watched, and that every effort will be made to detain us."

"I have no doubt that there will!" exclaimed Erick. "Sister Ursula, as they call their lady abbess, would move heaven and earth to detain them if she knew that they wished to escape. Do not write, lest the letter should fall into the old dame's hands; but let me go with Albert, and depend on it we shall find means before long of letting out the caged birds."

The knight, without saying what Albert proposed doing, showed Ava's letter to Dame Margaret. She was horrified.

"What, a professed nun break her vows!" she exclaimed. "A bride of Christ forsake her bridegroom! Horrible profanity! No. I love Ava as my daughter, but I can never receive one who is so utterly neglectful of all her religious obligations. You must write and tell her that it is impossible to comply with her request. I am sure Father Nicholas will agree with me."

"Dear wife," said the knight, calmly, "when I allowed our little Ava to become a nun, it was to secure, as I thought, her happiness in this life and the next. She tells us that, in one respect, our object has signally failed, and there is a book I have been reading which convinces me that it will not advance in one single respect our object with regard to the other. Therefore, let our dear Ava come home, and do you and Laneta receive her as should her mother and sister. I mean what I say, Margaret, and advise Father Nicholas to hold his tongue about the matter."

The Lady Margaret, watching her lord's eye, and being a discreet woman, came to the conclusion that it would be wise to keep silent, but she secretly resolved to use every exertion to prevent so terrible a scandal taking place in her family. The knight, however, was an old soldier, and, suspecting what was passing in the mind of his better half, determined to be beforehand with her.

"She will be writing to that Sister Ursula to keep the poor little dove under double lock and key," he said to himself. "Erick will have a difficulty even to get sight of her. I must tell him what I suspect, and leave it to him to foil the plans of his lady mother; she is a good woman though—an excellent woman in her way—but she would have been much the better if she had never been saddled with Father Nicholas. I will make him go to the right-about one of these days, when he least expects it, if he does not reform his system. And here, Erick, you will want money. Don't stint in the use of it. It will accomplish many things. Silver keys open locks more rapidly than iron ones, and I would give every coin I possess to get our dear little Ava back again."

Erick and his friend, meantime, were making preparations for their journey, and as soon as their horses could be got ready they rode off. They were, however, seen by Dame Margaret, who immediately suspected where they were going. Unfortunately, Father Nicholas had just then entered the castle. She forthwith told him all she knew and thought,

and urged him to find a quick messenger, who would outstrip the young men and warn the lady abbess. Father Nicholas hurried off with a purse which the lady put into his hand to find a person to carry his message, resolving to take the credit to himself of the information he was sending.

Ava Schönfeldt and her companions in the monastery of Nimptsch were eagerly awaiting the reply to the letters they had written to their homes requesting permission to return. They were all young, and several of them pretty; but as they had been among the most sincere of the sisterhood, so they had the most rigidly performed all the fasts, penances, vigils, imposed on them, and already the bloom of youth had departed, and the pallor of the ascetic had taken its place.

Poor girls! they had sought peace, but found none; they desired to be holy, but they had discovered that fasts, penances, and vigils—the daily routine of formal services—long prayers oft repeated, had produced no effect; that their spirits might be broken by this system, but that it could not change their hearts.

"We are shut out from the great world, certainly," wrote one of them, "but we have one within these walls, and a poor, miserable, trivial, life-frittering, childish, querulous, useless, hopeless set of inhabitants it contains. This is not the house of Martha, and Mary, and Lazarus—this is not such an abode as Jesus would desire to lodge in. If He were to visit us, it would be to tell us to go forth into the world to fulfil our duties as women, not, like cowards, to shrink from them, to fight the good fight of faith, to serve Him in the stirring world into which He came, in which He walked, in which He lived, that He might be an example to us. Though He has not come to our convent, He has sent us a message full of love and compassion—His Testament, the Gospel—and it has given us fresh life, fresh hopes, fresh aspirations; and other books have been sent us to assist in opening our eyes, and through the teaching we are sure of the Holy Spirit which He promised. We are convinced that this mode of life is not the one for which we were born; that it is a life, not of holiness, but of sin, for it is useless, for it is aimless, for it is against all the teaching of the blessed Gospel."

The answers came at length. Tears flowed from the eyes of some, sobs burst from the bosoms of others, while several turned paler even than before, and their hands hung hopelessly by their sides. Many of the letters were full of kind expressions, while other parents chided their daughters harshly for contemplating the possibility of breaking their vows, and abandoning the life of holiness to which they were devoted; but one and all wound up by declaring that they would not allow such a stigma to rest on their noble families as would arise were they to encourage a daughter to abandon her holy calling. Little Ava received no answer to her epistle sent by the colporteur, and she was eagerly looking out for his return. He had told her how eagerly her father had bought his books, and she had still some hopes that the reply would be favourable. She could not, however, fail to observe the severe look with which the lady abbess regarded her, and she was still more alarmed when she found that her Testament, and several books by Drs. Melancthon and Luther, had been taken out of her cell. In truth, the lady abbess had received the communication sent by Father Nicholas, and was on the

watch, expecting to see the gay young student Erick Schönfeldt and his companion arrive, intending afterwards to commence a system of severe punishment on the offending Ava. The lady abbess was not aware that Ava was only one of many whose eyes had been opened, and who desired their freedom.

III.

One bright afternoon, in the month of May, 1524, a light waggon, driven by a venerable-looking person with a long white beard, stopped before the gate of the convent of Nimptsch, and from out of it stepped a merchant of equally venerable and still more dignified appearance. He begged the portress to present his humble respects to the lady abbess, with a request that he might be allowed to offer for sale to the noble ladies numerous articles which they might find acceptable. The lady abbess, having carefully surveyed the venerable merchant and his driver through a lattice above the gate, was satisfied that they might, without danger, be admitted into the court-yard. The horses were, however, somewhat restive, and it required, evidently, all the strength the old driver possessed to keep them quiet while his master took out his bales and boxes, and conveyed them, with somewhat feeble steps, into the room where strangers, such as he, were received. An iron grating ran across it, within which the nuns were collected; but there existed a small window, through which articles could be handed for inspection.

The merchant evidently understood the tastes and requirements of nuns. There were silks for embroidery, and gold thread, and beads, and pencils and brushes and colours for illuminating missals, and paper and writing materials, and various manufactures for making artificial flowers; he had even spices and mixtures for making confectionary. There was linen also, coarse and fine, and all the materials of the exact hue required by the sisters for their dresses; indeed, it would have been difficult to say what there was not in Herr Schmidt's waggon which the nuns could possibly require. The price, too, at which he sold his goods was remarkably low, and the nuns of Nimptsch were not at all averse to making good bargains. Unfortunately, however, he discovered that he had only brought specimens of many of the articles. His large waggon he had left at Torgau. He would, therefore, take the orders with which the holy ladies might honour him, and return next day with the goods.

The merchant, Herr Schmidt, was better than his word, for he returned the next day not only with the articles ordered, but with many other curious things, which he had brought, he said, for the inspection and amusement of the ladies, and the servants and attendants in the house; the good portress especially was remembered. There were carriages and animals which ran along the ground by themselves, and a house in which a door opened, when out of it came a cock which crowed, and then a small bird came out of an upper window and sang, and then a woman looked out to ascertain what the noise was about. Numerous toys of a similar character the merchant had brought, he said, from Nuremburg.

Meantime, the horses in the waggon became very frisky, the merchant, therefore, went down, with most of his boxes, to help quiet them, he said, leaving the abbess and her nuns busily engaged with the toys; the

portress, too, was still watching the cock coming out of the house and crowing, and the bird singing, and the woman looking out to see what it was all about.

"These horses will be doing some mischief, Karl, if they stay shut up in this court-yard," exclaimed the merchant. "I will open the gate, and then if they choose to gallop off they will soon get tired, and you can come back for me and my goods."

Suiting the action to the word, he undid the bars of the gate, and Karl drove through, pulling up, however, directly he was outside. The portress ran out, for such a thing as allowing a stranger to open the gate was against all rule.

"Stay, I have some more curious things," said the merchant. And he stepped into the waggon.

Just at that moment something must have startled the horses, for they set off at full speed, the driver in no way attempting to stop them. The lady abbess and the nuns looked out through the bars of the windows, expecting to see Herr Schmidt, after his horses had had a good gallop, return with the other curiosities he had said he possessed. They looked and looked, but they looked in vain. At last they came to the conclusion that some accident had happened. For this they were very sorry, as they all agreed that a more pleasant-spoken liberal merchant they had never seen. The opinions, however, of the lady abbess and some of the elder sisters were somewhat modified when at vespers, as all the nuns were assembled. Sister Ava and another young and pretty nun, her great friend, Sister Beatrice, were missing. They were not in their cells. The whole convent was searched; they were not to be found. Never had there been such a commotion among the authorities and elder sisters, though most of the young ones took the matter very quietly, and did not search for what they well knew was not to be found. Remembering the warning she had received, the lady abbess had a strong suspicion that Erick Schönfeldt was at the bottom of the matter. This was only the beginning of her troubles. Somehow or other, fresh heretical books were introduced into the convent, and the young nuns had so completely mastered the contents of those of which they had been deprived, that they were able to discuss them and explain them to the elder sisters. Even the abbess herself could not answer many of their arguments which they boldly put forth, nor indeed could the father confessor, nor the other visiting priests. Of the last, one heartily agreed with them, and the others boldly acknowledged that there was a good deal of truth in what they said. Gaining confidence, nine young ladies at last united to support each other, and positively refused to attend mass or any services when adoration was paid to the Virgin Mary or to the saints, and demanded that as their vows were taken in ignorance, and that as they were directly contrary to the Gospel, they should be released from them, and allowed to return into the world to fulfil their duties as virtuous women and citizens.

Those in authority were astonished and utterly confounded, and hesitated to take any harsh measures. Public opinion they well knew outside the convent walls ran pretty strongly in favour of the nuns' opinions. As their friends would not receive them at home, the young ladies resolved to repair in a body to some respectable place with order and decency. Through some means their resolution was made known to

two pious citizens of Torgau, Leonard Koppe and Wolff Tomitzsch, who offered their assistance. "It was accepted as coming from God himself," says an historian of that time. Without opposition they left the convent, and Koppe and Tomitzsch received them in their waggon, and conveyed them to the old Augustine convent in Wittemburg, of which Luther at that time was the sole occupant.

"This is not my doing," said Luther, as he received them; "but would to God that I could thus rescue all captive consciences, and empty all the cloisters. The breach is made."

Catharine Bora, who afterwards became his wife, found a welcome in the family of the burgomaster of Wittemburg, and the other nuns, as soon as their arrival was known, were gladly received in other families of similar position. It may here be remarked that the facts of the case completely refute the vulgar notion put forth by the enemies of the Reformation, that Luther commenced the work of the Reformation for the sake of enabling himself and other monks and priests to marry. His mind was long in doubt whether monks ought to marry. Many months after he became acquainted with the excellent Catharine, when his friends pressed him to marry, he replied:

"God may change my heart if it is His pleasure, but I have no thought of taking a wife. Not that I feel no attractions in that state, but every day I expect the death and the punishment of a heretic."

Not till more than a year after Catharine Bora had escaped from the convent did he marry.

IV.

The Knight of Schönfeldt had been anxiously waiting news from Erick, but none had arrived. The Lady Margaret had been assured by Father Nicholas that his message had been safely delivered to the Abbess of Nimptsch, and that, in spite of all Master Erick and his plausible friend might do, she would take very good care her little prisoner should not escape her.

The knight was growing anxious; he was afraid that something had gone wrong, when, one afternoon, a light waggon, the horses which drew it covered with foam, drove up to the gate of the castle. Over the drawbridge it dashed, for the porter did not hesitate to admit it, and a venerable-looking old gentleman, habited as a merchant, descending, handed out two young girls in peasants' dresses. The knight caught sight of the waggon, and hurrying down, one of the girls was soon in his arms.

"My own Ava! My pet little bird, and you have escaped from your cage! Welcome—welcome home, and praised be God who has given me this great blessing!" he exclaimed, again and again kissing her cheek.

His child wept as she hung on the old man's neck. While this was taking place, the other young lady looked about very much astonished and frightened, though there was nothing particular to frighten her, and the grave merchant was doing his best to reassure her.

"Well done, Erick, my boy—well done, Albert von Otten!" exclaimed the knight, when he could bring himself to turn his attention for a moment from his recovered daughter.

"Oh! thank Albert, father; it was he thought of the plan; he designed the whole of it. I merely acted the part he selected for me," answered Erick.

"I thank him heartily, then; for very well done it has been, and you have both my eternal gratitude," said the knight. "And this young lady, I conclude that she helped you in the undertaking?"

"No; it was they helped me to run away, as Ava did not like to go alone, and she promised me an asylum under your roof."

"And you shall have it, if the Pope and all the cardinals were to come and demand you. They shall pull the walls down before I will give you up. And now tell me who are you, my dear fräuline?"

"I am Beatrice von Reichenau, of Swabia. My father, Count von Reichenau, and my mother decline to receive me, and yet they love me, I am sure; but, alas! they little know the horrors of the life to which they had devoted me."

"Better times will come, my sweet fräuline!" said the knight, who just then saw everything in a bright light.

Meantime, Dame Margaret, Father Nicholas not being in the castle, having seen the waggon and the young ladies get out of it, and guessing what had happened, and that her fine scheme had failed, went to the great hall, accompanied by Laneta, that she might receive Ava with becoming dignity, and reprimand her in a manner suitable to her offence. She had just taken her post, when the knight entered with timid little Ava clinging to his arm, looking more sweet and lovable than ever in her becoming peasant's dress, and not a bit like a wicked runaway nun. As soon as she saw her mother, she ran forward and threw herself into her arms, half weeping and half smiling.

"Oh, mother—mother, I am so thankful to see you again!" she cried.

Dame Margaret began her speech, but it would not come out. Nature asserted her rights over bigotry and superstition; she burst into tears, and, folding her daughter to her bosom, exclaimed, "And I, Ava, am glad to have you, darling!"

"I always said that she was a good woman, and now I am convinced of it," said the knight. "Father Nicholas has done his best to spoil her, but, thank Heaven! he has not succeeded, and his reign is pretty well over, I suspect."

Laneta, who really in her way loved her sister, followed her mother's lead, and embraced Ava affectionately. The dame Margaret was also not a little gratified when she found that her daughter's companion in her flight was so high-born a girl as Beatrice von Reichenau.

"If a young lady of her rank could do such a thing, it surely could not be so very wrong," she said to herself.

Her reasoning was not very good, but it served just then to smoothe matters.

Ava and her friend were not idle in the castle, nor did they confine their labours to it. Their mild, gentle, subdued manners and earnest and zealous spirits attracted all hearts with whom they came in contact. The glorious truths they had received into their own souls they were anxious to impart to others, nor did they feel that any trouble, any exertion, was too great for them to take to forward that object. Still it was

very evident that to effect any speedy change on a large scale among the peasantry a preacher was required. Albert von Otten had been made a priest in the days of his ignorance before he went to Wittemburg, and he remembered the knight's offer to let him preach in the neighbouring church. Father Nicholas somewhat demurred, but the knight assured him that Albert von Otten, he was sure, would only preach sound doctrine, and advised him to hold his tongue. Such a sermon as Albert preached had never been heard in that church. He said not a word about himself. He held up but one object—Christ Jesus walking on earth, Christ Jesus crucified, Christ rising again, Christ ascending into heaven, Christ sitting on the right hand of God pleading for sinners. Then he added:

"Dear friends, once a man came among you to sell you what he called indulgences; were they indulgences to commit sin, or indulgences to obtain pardon? What impious imposition! Oh, dear friends—dear friends! God's gifts of grace are free—are priceless. The blood of His only Son purchased them for us once for all. Gifts, gifts—free, free gifts—are what God offers; no selling now, no purchasing now—that has all been done. Christ has paid the price for every sin that man has committed or ever will commit, and man can by his works not add one jot, one tittle, to that all-sufficient price. God's offer is all of free grace. Man has but to look to Christ, to repent, to desire to be healed, and he will be forgiven, he will be accepted and received into heaven. Dear friends, when Moses was leading the Israelites out of Egypt, the land of persecution, of slavery, of idolatry, through the wilderness, they were visited by a plague of venomous serpents whose bite sent fiery pains through their bodies, which speedily terminated by their death. God then ordered Moses to make a brazen serpent" (the serpent being among the Egyptians the emblem of the healing power, which was well understood by them*). "This serpent he was to raise up on a pole in a conspicuous part of the encampment, and all who simply looked at it desiring to be healed were instantly to be healed. Moses asked no price, no reward; the bitten sufferers were only to exert themselves to look to ensure being healed. Christ himself told His disciples, 'As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so shall the Son of man be lifted up'—that was Himself, on the cross—'that all'—of every tongue, and kindred, and nation—'who believe in Him'—that is to say, look on Him as the Israelites at the brazen serpent—'shall not perish'—shall not die of the fiery bite of sin—'but have eternal life.' This is Gospel—Gospel truth. Then what becomes of indulgences, penances, fasts, invocations to saints, to the Virgin Mary, gifts, alms, if bestowed with the idea of purchasing aught? All useless, vain, insulting to God's generosity, mercy, kindness. It is as if a great noble, to pardon a poor man who had grossly offended him, and were, moreover, to bestow a favour on him, and the poor man were to offer him a groat as payment, saying, 'No, I cannot receive your pardon and your favour as a free gift; I must return you something; indeed, a groat is not much, neither do I very greatly value your pardon, because I do not think my offence was very great, nor your favour, which, after all, is but small.'

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* An interpolation of the author's, this fact probably not being known in Luther's days.

"'Foolish man,' the lord would say, 'I bestowed that pardon and that favour on you in my beneficence. I require nothing in return but your gratitude and your obedience, and that you should speak of my name and fame among my other vassals, and live in amity with them, doing them all the service in your power. Say, foolish man, what else can a poor, helpless, decrepit, broken-down creature like yourself do for me?' What should you say, dear friends, if this poor wretched man were to answer, 'No, but there are a set of people in your dominions, who assume to be your ministers, though to be sure they make a mockery of your name and love to send people over to serve your enemies, I can buy of them what they call indulgences, which they say are much better than your free pardon; besides, I may offend as often as I please, and you will be compelled to forgive me because I have paid them; and if it were not for these indulgences, I could fast, I could beat myself, and perform numberless other penances; I could mumble petitions to you, not thinking of what I was saying; indeed, I have no fear but what I can make ample amends to you for this gift which you have bestowed, for this pardon which you have offered.' Dear friends, you will say what a weak, conceited, foolish, impudent wretch is that man of whom you speak; and yet what are you doing when you perform penances, and fasts, and such-like works? What did you do when you purchased that mountebank impostor Tetzel's indulgences? Confess—confess that he swindled you out of your money, but oh do not, by trusting to them, which you might as well do as a sinking man to a feather or a straw in the raging ocean, allow the arch-deceiver Satan to swindle you out of your souls."

This address, of which many similar were delivered at that time throughout Germany and Switzerland, produced a great effect in the village. No one heard it more eagerly, or with greater delight, than Ava and her companion. It brought out clearly so much of what they had read in the convent.

"God's free grace! God's free grace!" they repeated to each other. "Oh, what a loving, merciful God he must be!"

It made Father Nicholas very uncomfortable. Had he, then, all his life been encouraging a system of imposture? It was a question he would have to answer somehow. Dame Margaret also went back to the castle sorely troubled in mind. She thought that she had, by purchasing Tetzel's indulgences, secured the salvation of herself and all her family. She was fond of a bargain, and she thought that really she had made a good one by the expenditure of a few gold ducats, considering the advantage to be gained. And now she was afraid that she and her husband and children were no nearer heaven than they were before she had bought the indulgences; and from the description Tetzel gave of it, purgatory must be a very disagreeable place, but she comforted herself by thinking that Tetzel might have imposed on his hearers in that matter also.

As, however, there was no lack of Testaments in simple, clear German, and parts of the Bible also, and Albert and Erick, and Ava and Beatrice, too, were able and anxious to explain it gradually, both Dame Margaret's and Laneta's eyes were opened, and their faith in the system to which they had before clung was greatly shaken. Father Nicholas, however, could not be so easily turned from his old notions, and now came the terrible convulsion caused by the outbreak of the peasantry and the awful bloodshedding which followed.

"Ah," he exclaimed, triumphantly, "see the work which Luther and his followers have produced!"

"No such thing," answered the knight, indignantly; "you ought to know that these attempts were commenced long before Dr. Luther was heard of. Discontent has been fermenting among them for many years. They have some reason and a great deal of folly on their side. They have done their work like foolish savages as they are, and they will suffer the fate of fools, though, in the mean time, they may do a great deal of mischief."

V.

It was at the eventful period described in the last chapter that the Knight of Schönfeldt was first introduced to the reader leaning on his elbow with a book before him in his turret-chamber. He had great cause for thoughtfulness. Erick and Albert had gone back to Wittemburg, Ava and Beatrice had continued earnestly labouring among the surrounding peasantry, and the minds of the poor people had been awakened by Albert's sermons with great success. Dame Margaret and Laneta continued wavering, and Father Nicholas, though he did not openly oppose the progress of the Gospel, persevered in all his old practices, and remained ready to take the winning side. Public events were one cause of the knight's anxiety, and besides, it was rumoured, that insurgents were appearing in his neighbourhood threatening to attack his among other surrounding castles. It would be wrong to deny that the Reformation was not in a certain degree connected with the rebellion of the peasants, but in this manner: The liberty which the Gospel demands for all men when the spirit of that Gospel is received into their hearts, makes them submit to rulers and endure persecutions patiently; but when, though men know its truths, their hearts have not been regenerated, they, being aware of their rights, as men appeal to the sword to obtain them.

Certain fanatics, also, had appeared, who, though professing to found their doctrines on the Bible, were greatly opposed to the principles of the Gospel. The most notorious of these was Thomas Munzer, pastor of Alstadt, in Thuringia; another was John Muller, of Bulgenbach, in the Black Forest, the inhabitants of which he rallied round him, and raised the standard of rebellion. Here the insurrection began on the 19th of July, 1524, some Thurgovian peasants rose against the Abbot of Reichenau, who would not accord them an evangelical preacher. Ere long, thousands were collected round the small town of Tengen, to liberate an ecclesiastic who was there imprisoned. The revolt spread rapidly from Swabia as far as the Rhenish provinces, Franconia, Thuringia, and Saxony. At Weinsberg, Count Louis, of Holfenstein, and seventy men under his orders, were condemned to death by the rebels. A body of peasants drew up with their pikes lowered, whilst others drove the count and his soldiers against this wall of steel. At the approach of the peasants, the cities that were unable to resist them opened their gates and joined them. Wherever they appeared they pulled down the images and broke the crucifixes. Many nobles, some through fear and others from ambition, joined them.

In vain Luther wrote to them, "Rebellion never produces the amelioration we desire, and God condemns it. What is it to rebel if it be not to avenge oneself? The devil is striving to excite to revolt those who embrace the Gospel, in order to cover it with opprobrium; but those who have rightly understood my doctrine do not revolt."

At length the princes threw off their lethargy; the imperial forces marched to encounter the peasants, and defeated them in every direction. The nobles were soon victorious, and retaliated with most terrible severity on the misguided men. The peasants were hung up by hundreds at the roadside, the eyes of numbers were put out, and some were burnt alive, and in all parts of the country the Romish style of worship was re-established. Still the rebellion was far from being stamped out, and large bodies of insurgents were in arms in different parts of the country besides those in the neighbourhood of the Castle of Schönfeldt. The knight had done his best to put his castle in a state of defence, and his own tenantry promised to come in and fight to the last gasp should it be attacked. Ava and Beatrice, notwithstanding the state of things, went about the country as before, fearless of danger. "We are doing our duty," they answered, when Dame Margaret expostulated with them; "we are carrying out the work to which we devoted our lives, in helping our suffering fellow-creatures, in making known the love of God through His dear Son, and He will protect us."

The knight, as I have said, having done all that a man could do, sat down in his study to quiet his mind by reading. He found it, however, a difficult task. Even when he managed to keep his eyes on the page, his mind let them labour alone, and refused to take in the matter they attempted to convey. It was a positive relief when he heard a horse's hoofs clattering into the court-yard. He hurried down to hear the news brought by the horseman. It was truly alarming. The scout, who had been sent out by the knight to gain information, stated that a body of some thousand men were advancing, threatening to destroy all the castles in the district, and that Schönfeldt was the first on their line of march. Not a moment was to be lost. He instantly sent out messengers, some to summon his retainers, and others to bring in provisions. The draw-bridge was raised, the gates secured. Dame Margaret and Laneta were greatly alarmed. Father Nicholas, who had arrived with all the ornaments of the church, and as much as his mule could carry, urged the ladies, and all he could get to listen to him, to invoke the protection of the saints. "These new-fangled doctrines brought about all these disorders; ergo, you must go back to the old system to avert them, if it is not already too late."

The knight advised him to talk sense or keep silence, but the time was opportune, he thought.

"Religion must be supported," he answered, meaning the Romish system, "or we shall be undone."

From the top of the watch-tower a cloud of dust was seen rising. It was caused by the insurgent peasants, horse and foot, approaching.

"Poor people, they have many real causes of complaint. I wish that they had remained quiet, for their own sake, and allowed the law to right them," observed the knight.

"Let us pray for them that their hearts may be changed, and that they

may see their folly and wickedness," said Ava, and Beatrice repeated the sentiment.

Just then three horsemen were seen approaching the castle at full speed. The knight soon recognised his son and Albert von Otten; the other was a stranger.

"Ah, they come to bring us the aid of their swords," exclaimed the knight. "Three gentlemen will be a host in themselves when opposed to those unhappy serfs."

The drawbridge was lowered to admit them. Erick directed that it should be left down, as they were going again to sally forth immediately. He embraced his father and mother and sisters, and he might have said a few words to Beatrice, as certainly Albert did to Ava, and Erick introduced the stranger as Frederick Myconius, professor of divinity.

"Welcome, gentlemen; but I thought, I confess, that you were fighting men come to aid in the defence of the castle. I was counting on your good swords."

"Our good swords you shall have, father," answered Erick, taking off the belt to which hung the scabbard of his weapon. "But we ourselves cannot wield them. We go forth with other weapons than those of steel, and trusting to other strength than an arm of flesh to quell these misguided men. Dr. Myconius will address them, as Dr. Martin Luther has already addressed thousands, and turned them aside from their purpose of vengeance. We have, though, no time to lose."

"Go forth, my son—go forth, my friends; I feel sure that God, who sees all our actions, will protect you with His almighty arm in so noble, so pious an object," exclaimed the knight, holding the sword which had been given to him.

The three brave young men rode forth from the castle unarmed, and hastened towards the rebel host. They were well aware of the danger, humanly speaking, to which they were exposing themselves, but not for a moment did they hesitate doing what they knew to be right. They were soon face to face with the insurgent band, led on by a man in a red cloak and hat and white plume. They were a wild, savage set of beings in appearance. Many a bold man might have hesitated to encounter them. Those who now advanced to meet them trusted not in their own strength to deliver them. Dr. Myconius rode first. As he drew close to the insurgents, he lifted up his arm and said:

"Bear with me, dear friends, while I address a few words to you, and ask you what you seek? what are you about to do? what object do you desire to gain? Is it one well pleasing to God, or is it not rather one He abhors? Is it revenge? The Gospel of Jesus Christ will not permit its indulgence. Is it to overthrow principalities and powers? The Gospel orders us to obey them. Is it to oppose the power of the Papacy? The light of truth can alone do that. Is it lust, rapine, murder, you desire to commit? Those who do such things can never inherit the kingdom of heaven. Listen, dear friends, to those who love you, who feel for you, who know that you have souls to be saved—precious souls above all price in God's sight, for for them He sent down his Son on earth to suffer far more wrongs than you have ever suffered. Endanger not those precious souls by the acts you contemplate. Turn aside from your purpose, fall on your knees, pray to God to enlighten your minds, to give you patience

above all things to bear your sufferings here for a short time, that, trusting in the merits of Christ Jesus, who once suffered for you, and now reigns and pleads for you, you may be raised up to dwell with Him, to reign with Him in happiness unspeakable for ever and ever."

Such was the style of eloquence with which one of the great leaders of the Reformation addressed the lately infuriated insurgents. It went to their hearts; they acknowledged its truth, the power from which it flowed, and yielded to its influence. Peaceably they divided into small parties: thus they returned to their villages, to their separate homes, speaking as they went of the love of Christ and the sufferings He had endured for their sakes, and praying that they too might endure any sufferings it might please their heavenly Father to call on them to bear with patience for His sake, that thus the Christian character might be exalted in the eyes of the world.

The three friends returned to the castle. The success of their undertaking was heard of with astonishment. The knight went to his Testament, and came back exclaiming, "I see, I see, it was the right way to do it. It was the way Jesus Christ would have acted, and I doubt not He was with you to counsel and guide you."

Dame Margaret and Laneta, and even Father Nicholas, confessed that the mode they had employed, with Dr. Martin Luther and others, to put down the insurrection, was far more satisfactory and sensible than that which the Roman Catholic nobles and knights had pursued with cannon-balls, bullets, and sharp swords. The two ladies at length, through the gentle influences of Ava and Beatrice, completely abandoned the errors of Rome, and embraced the truths of evangelical religion. Father Nicholas, still clinging to the idolatry to which he had been accustomed, was compelled to give up his cure, and thankfully accepted a small pension from the knight, on condition that he should keep silence till he had learned the truth. Albert von Otten, notwithstanding his rank, gladly became the humble pastor of Schönfeldt, and little Ava as gladly became his most efficient helpmate, while Beatrice von Reichenau married Erick. The knight arrived at a green old age, and though there was little peace in the world, he found it in his home and in his heart, and saw his grandchildren grow up pious Christians and sound brave Protestants.

SNOWED UP.

BY MRS. BUSHBY.

XI.

The Spirit's Prophecy.

I.

UNJUST SUSPICIONS.

Poor General Mentilla was certainly placed in a painful and awkward position. He had to confess to Mr. St. Clair his clandestine marriage with his second daughter, and, at the same time, to announce that his eldest daughter, who was supposed to have been drowned in the harbour of her native island, was alive, and residing in his house, as a member of his establishment.

Mentilla was a man possessed of great courage; brave on the field of battle, bold in his decisions and political views, cool and collected when many others were flurried, calm and self-possessed in the midst of dangers. But the very unpleasant situation into which a chain of circumstances had thrown him, almost entirely unnerved him. He knew that he had done wrong, and that, for this wrong, Mr. St. Clair would justly upbraid him; and he felt that, even where he had done no wrong, appearances were against him, and that not only Mr. St. Clair, but every one who heard the tale of Adela's having accompanied him in disguise, would believe him guilty of a great crime, as the victim was the sister of the young lady with whom he had entered into a secret marriage.

How was he to clear his character?

What was he to do with Adela?

These were questions of moment, yet he was quite at a loss how to answer them.

In his dilemma, Hector Graham was very useful to him. He offered to write Mr. St. Clair the story of Adela's extraordinary escapade, and to vouch for General Mentilla's utter ignorance of his page being any other than the Harry St. Clair for whom he gave himself out, and who, it was well known in the island, had intended to smuggle himself on board the sloop which was to carry away the patriot officers.

General Mentilla was very grateful to Hector for his sympathy and kind offer, which he was glad to accept. But he thought it would be proper, before acquainting her family with Adela's continued existence, to have her removed from his house.

"I will take her straight home to her family, if you like," said Hector. "I dare say we shall find some opportunity from La Guayra to St. Thomas. I can write from thence, and ask her father to come down to receive her."

"You are very good indeed," replied General Mentilla; "but the unhappy girl's wishes must be consulted. We cannot send her off as a prisoner, or dispose of her as a bale of goods."

"True; but what is she to do, if she does not go back to her own re-

lations? She cannot reside in your house, and I have no house in which to receive her. Indeed, it would be less possible for her to stay with me than with you, for, after all, you *are* her brother-in-law, while *I* am only engaged to her sister. I wish to Heaven that she had not acted so like a mad-woman. It is dreadful to think of the misery her folly will cause the old man her father, and poor Linda, and dearest Minna."

"Dreadful indeed!" echoed General Mentilla.

Neither the general nor Hector had seen the pretended Harry St. Clair since the discovery made by Dolores and Maria. The poor young woman continued in a very weak state, and in extremely low spirits. It was with difficulty that she was persuaded to take either nourishment or medicines, and she had frequent fits of crying, exhausted by which she sometimes fell asleep. In her sleep she would occasionally murmur a few words, which were always repeated to General Mentilla by his housekeeper, who understood a little English. It was these short broken sentences which convinced both Hector and Mentilla that the pretended page was the missing Adela.

She had been heard to say:

"Go, go, Linda! You are a viper—you have stolen him from me." "Papa, she has deceived you—Linda has destroyed me!" "Oh, Mentilla! why did you let her lure you from me?" Then, again: "Drowned—drowned! they say—it will be true. The sharks—never mind." "Dearest papa, forgive your . . . farewell!" "You are *not* his wife, Linda. Minna, tell her so."

These and similar half-uttered sentences gave "confirmation strong" to the suspicions already entertained by the general and Hector. General Mentilla dreaded the idea of seeing her; Hector did not feel it so much.

A day or two after, the doctor came to them and told them that his patient, who now appeared more collected, had said both to Dolores and to him that she wished to get up, for she wanted to go away. She had been asked where she wanted to go, and had replied she wished to leave General Mentilla's house, and to provide for herself. She had also asked the doctor if he could get her any employment in some office or shop.

"It is evident," said the doctor, "she does not know that her secret has been discovered; but, of course, she ought to be made acquainted with this, gentlemen, unless, indeed," he added, glancing towards General Mentilla, "there be any reason for her resuming her disguise."

"Who can undertake to make this disclosure to her?" asked the general. "It will be a most painful task."

"Will you not do so yourself, general?" replied the doctor.

"I! Not for worlds. A delusion of hers respecting me has been lately destroyed, and this has caused her illness. No—*I* cannot tell her. But I must write to her relatives in the West Indies, if she turns out to be the person my friend and I fancy she is, and it will be necessary to let her know that her disguise has been found out."

"It is a very strange affair!" remarked the doctor, who felt a good deal of curiosity as to who the assumed page might be.

"Very strange indeed," said Hector. "In fact, quite unaccountable."

"May I venture to ask *one* question?" said the doctor. "Do you believe the young person who has passed for a page is a lady, or a

woman in a lower rank of life? If she is a young lady, it will be a more delicate task to communicate the discovery made respecting her sex than if she is a person of an inferior situation, consequently, in all probability, less refined in feelings."

"Very true," replied General Mentilla. "If she is the person we suspect her to be, she is a young lady belonging to a highly respectable family, who at present think that she was drowned by the accidental upsetting of a boat in which she is supposed to have been. They are all in mourning for her. This gentleman—Mr. Graham—and myself both believed she was unhappily drowned, and I had not the slightest idea that my page was any other than a boy."

"Would not the housekeeper tell her?" asked Hector.

"She hardly understands or speaks English well enough to make such a communication otherwise than abruptly; it will require some management to break the truth to her. If you wish it, general, I will undertake to do it, but it would be well if I had some knowledge of her *motive* for passing herself off as a young man."

"That is out of our power to impart to you," said Mentilla. "We are ourselves ignorant of her motive. The whole matter is a complete mystery to us. All I can say is, that if she be the young lady we fancy, she was a great enthusiast in the cause of the patriots, and may have worked herself up to the wild resolution of going to fight with them. She was extremely anxious to join our army, and wished me to let her go, as a common soldier, into my regiment."

"An extraordinary whim!" exclaimed the doctor, with an incredulous smile.

"Curious things happen sometimes in this world,"* remarked Hector, who had observed the doctor's doubting expression of countenance. "I can only assure you that, whatever induced the young lady to act so like a lunatic, she is not now, never was, and never will be, in any way connected with General Mentilla herself. He is quite innocent of any blame in regard to her escapade, and would never have encouraged her flight from her home had he entertained the slightest suspicion of it."

The doctor, to use a common expression, beat about the bush a little longer, in the hope of obtaining some more information respecting his young lady patient, but no more was forthcoming. He was somewhat annoyed, for he felt convinced that the gentlemen knew more than they chose to tell.

After a moment or two's indecision, he said that he would relieve them

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* That females do sometimes assume the dress and appearance of the male sex, is a known fact. An instance of this travestie was given in the *Times* newspaper of June 12, 1866, and is as follows:

"The *Mobile* (Alabama) *Tribune* refers editorially to the following card, published in its advertising columns, as coming from a person 'noted as a skilful officer and for indomitable perseverance and pluck:'

"'To the Public.—The undersigned has been pained by the circulation of slanders concerning her loyalty to the late confederacy. She takes this means of pronouncing them all false, and without a shadow of foundation. Those who desire a refutation of them can see her at the Battle House, and those who persist in circulating them will do so at their peril.

"'Mrs. Lorreta J. Decaulf,
"'Formerly Lieutenant T. Buford, C.S.A."

of their difficulty about conveying to the pretended page the intelligence that her secret was known, and both Mentilla and Hector gladly closed with his offer.

"A young woman who could act with such imprudence," thought the doctor, "will not be so cautious as Mentilla and his friend are, and no doubt she will confide her whole history to me. I wonder if the general is as blameless as he pretends to be? I can't but think it is a love-affair. General Mentilla is a very handsome man, and known to be a favourite among the ladies."

The doctor was evidently determined to get up a romance, in which the patriot general was to figure as a Don Juan, and the supposed Enrico as his chère amie.

II.

THE DOCTOR AND HIS PATIENT.

THE doctor took a turn in the garden, in order, without interruption, to arrange his tactics; then he proceeded to the room of the invalid, who was now much better, and in the most cautious and circuitous manner conveyed to her the knowledge that her secret was discovered.

She was very much shocked and distressed, and, covering her face with her small, beautifully-shaped hands, which of themselves might have told the tale of what she was, she remained for some little time in profound silence. The doctor did not disturb her reverie either with questions or remarks, but considerately walked to the window and leaned out of it, leaving the young woman to recover some composure before he should accost her again. At length a low, gentle voice called him, and in a moment he was by the bedside of his patient.

"Doctor," she said, in scarcely audible tones, "do they know it? I mean Hector and . . . and General Mentilla?"

"They do," replied the doctor.

"Do they know who I am?"

"I cannot satisfy you on that point, for they pretend only to suspect who you are. They have not mentioned your name, and all they told me was that *if* you were the person they fancied you to be, you were a young lady of highly respectable family, supposed to be drowned by the upsetting of a boat."

"My God—my God!" cried the wretched girl. "Would that I had been drowned—would that I had died! How much misery I should have been saved!"

"Misery? I am very sorry for you," said the doctor, in an extremely sympathising manner.

"Thank you," said the girl. "You have been very kind to me, and I feel much obliged to you. I have no friend to apply to here. Will you kindly help me?"

"In what way, my dear young lady? What can I do for you?"

"Much. My dear father is far away; he believes me dead. I wish him to remain in his belief; better that than to know all. But I cannot remain in *this* house. Might I not, under the disguise of a young man, obtain some employment—something to enable me to provide the most common necessaries of life for myself? Perhaps you could assist me in this?"

"I cannot recommend you to resume your disguise," replied the doctor. "You would be sure to be detected sooner or later, even if I were to make a false statement about you, and the deception would naturally create suspicion, inquiry, and—I must be candid with you—disgrace."

"Disgrace!" echoed the invalid, in consternation. "Why disgrace?"

"Because every one would suppose that a young lady accompanying General Mentilla about disguised as his page must have some *very* particular reason for doing so, and that the general was not her employer, but had more intimate relations with her."

The young woman's eyes flashed fire, and if looks could have killed, the poor doctor would have been annihilated on the spot. Her face flushed crimson, as she exclaimed:

"That any one should dare to give utterance to such vile insinuations to *me*—should dare so to scandalise General Mentilla! He is the most honourable of men. If he deceived me, it was not *his* doing; he never knew that I was other than the person I gave myself out to be—a youth who bore a striking resemblance to me. I had my own reasons for coming to the Spanish Main; General Mentilla is entirely ignorant of them. As Enrico I could have remained his page until . . . until circumstances allowed me to confide my secret to him; but now—now I must go, Heaven only knows whither!"

The doctor tried to soothe her, and, promising to look out for some situation for her, he left her, apparently more calm.

As he left the room he remarked to himself:

"The young woman is deranged, that is the short and the long of the matter. I hope she won't either commit suicide or murder Mentilla." He called Dolores, and hinting to her that he thought the young person was a little out of her mind, he begged her to keep a strict watch over the patient.

Dolores was, of course, much alarmed at this communication, and almost afraid to be at any time alone with the ci-devant Enrico. She hastened to inform her master of the doctor's opinion, and the probability of that opinion being correct only added to the difficulties with which he had to contend.

"I will see her if she will admit me," said Hector, "and try to prevail on her to return to her home. They will be all very kind to her there."

He accordingly wrote a line to the invalid, asking her to see him, as he wished to do anything he could for her, whether she were Adela or not. The little billet, sealed, he committed to the charge of Dolores, who gave it to the now much-excited girl.

In the mean time a complete wardrobe, fit for the use of a lady, had been ordered, under the direction of Dolores, by General Mentilla, and sent to the chamber of the quondam Enrico.

The answer she sent to Hector was:

"I am Adela; but though still unhappily among the living, I am dead to all in this world—dead to my family and my former friends. I do not wish to see you. I am sufficiently humiliated and sufficiently punished for forgetting my duty to the best of fathers, and acting under a wild impulse and a cruel delusion. Leave me to the consequences of my folly, and let me be forgotten, or only remembered as one who is mouldering in the grave."

"This is terrible," said General Mentilla, when he saw her note to Hector. "I trust she will not destroy herself! What can we do for her or with her?"

"There is a little vessel going to St. Thomas in a day or two," replied Hector. "I will either take her home by that opportunity, or I will write Mr. St. Clair and Mrs. Rivers a full account of all we know of her doings since she left them. Depend on it I will exonerate you from all blame."

It was agreed between the gentlemen that they had no right to conceal Adela's existence from her father and sister, and, moreover, that they must await her father's instructions respecting her; but they would endeavour to find her a respectable and comfortable home until Mr. St. Clair should come or send for her, or at any rate direct her future movements.

"If we cannot find any family to receive her as a boarder," said General Mentilla, "I will give up this house to her, and leave Dolores and Maria here as her attendants."

Hector and Mentilla accordingly both wrote to Mr. St. Clair and to Mrs. Rivers. The poor general had an unpleasant task to perform in confessing to Linda's father the clandestine marriage to which he had persuaded her to consent. His revelations respecting Adela were also awkward to make; but knowing his own entire innocence in regard to her, these revelations did not annoy him half so much as the disclosure of his deception in the affair of his marriage. Hector, having nothing to confess, or nothing for which he could be blamed, wrote much more at his ease. Of course their letters to Linda and Minna were only labours of love, in which both indulged in the expression of all the warmth of their respective feelings.

The friends were taking a stroll in the garden together, after having sent off their despatches, and Mentilla was just saying:

"The sooner we evacuate this house the better, Hector. We can go to an hotel until we find some other quarters," when the doctor followed them to tell them that he had found the young lady extremely ill.

"She is quite delirious," he said, "and I fear she is labouring under an attack of brain-fever. The knowledge that her disguise has been discovered, and that you are aware who she is, has had a very injurious effect on her, and seems to have quite upset her mind."

The two gentlemen stood aghast at the information just received.

"Dios!" exclaimed Mentilla.

"Good Lord!" cried Hector.

They were both thrown into the utmost consternation, and both asked question after question at the same moment, Mentilla in his excitement speaking in Spanish, Hector, of course, in English.

"She is urgent to leave your house, general," continued the doctor, "and it was all that Dolores and Maria could do to keep her from rushing out into the street. They had to lock the door at last. When I arrived she was fatigued by the efforts she had made to escape, and had lain down again quite exhausted."

"Her wishes must be attended to immediately," said General Mentilla. "I have an aunt, a good old widow lady, who resides at a country-house a little way from Caraccas. I will go to her and try to persuade her to receive our poor young friend."

He did as he had promised, and his aunt, Madame La Roche, who had been married to a French gentleman, and lived much in England, France, and Spain with him in her younger years, and was a kind-hearted and excellent old lady, willingly agreed to take charge of the suffering young stranger, in whose history, partially communicated to her by her nephew, she was much interested.

Madame La Roche would have made any sacrifices in the cause of charity, but when her acquiescence in his request was also to oblige her nephew, of whom she was very proud as well as very fond, she was all eagerness to arrange everything to his satisfaction.

The unfortunate Adela was conveyed to this lady's villa, which was situated amidst the most lovely scenery in the healthy neighbourhood and charming climate of Caraccas, and General Mentilla sent Dolores and Maria to wait on her, thinking she would feel more at home with them than with entire strangers.

Madame La Roche did everything she could for the comfort of her suffering guest, but the doctor did not hold out much hope for the recovery of his young patient; at least, he said that, though she might regain bodily strength, her mind would not for a long time, if ever, be restored to sanity.

III.

A JOURNEY TO THE BANKS OF THE ORINOCO, AND A MYSTERIOUS CAVE.

NEITHER General Bolivar nor General Mentilla, though both were most anxious to obtain some employment for Hector Graham, had been able to find a situation likely to suit him, but they still hoped to do so in time; and, meanwhile, Mentilla pressed Hector to remain with him, and amuse himself as best he could in Caraccas. Hector, however, had not trusted entirely to the exertions of his South American friend, but had written from the West Indies to a relative of his own in England, a school and college-companion, whose father had a good deal of interest with the government, to ask him to apply for a consulship for him in one of the new states of South America.

The application, made at once, had been so far successful, that the appointment of consul to Cumana had been promised to Hector as soon as arrangements could be completed for sending one there, which it was expected would soon be done. Here, then, was a certain provision for Hector, at any rate for a time, and though the salary might not be large, he thought he and Minna might manage to live on it, with a small allowance from Mr. St. Clair to his daughter. Some time, however, must elapse before Hector could be inducted into the expected office, and he determined to pass that interval in travelling in the interior of the country. He did not feel inclined to trespass longer on General Mentilla's hospitality, though that gentleman gave him a warm invitation to remain with him.

"No, my kind friend," Hector said, in answer to this invitation, "at present I am a free and idle man, a bachelor with nothing to do, so I shall take the opportunity of seeing something of your magnificent country. By-and-by, when I am a married man, and a man of business, I shall not be so easily able to make a tour, especially extending over

some weeks. General Paez has very much raised my curiosity to visit the banks of the Orinoco. I should like to go as far as that mighty river the Amazon, but I fear so long a journey might be too much for my finances."

"Do not let *that* be an obstacle to the fulfilment of any wish of yours," replied General Mentilla. "I hope that you will look upon me as an intimate friend—and a brother-in-law to be—and allow me the pleasure of advancing to you any money you may require. Yet still I cannot recommend you to venture alone into that wild country, and among those Indians, some tribes of whom are even now almost savages. Many of their race hate the Spaniards, and they are not likely to discriminate between one white man and another. Paez being born an Indian, is probably safe among them, but it is not certain that you would be so."

"Oh, I have no fears," said Hector, laughing. "I don't suppose they will attack my poor head with the scalping-knife, or rush at me with the tomahawk. I am sure I shall be charmed with the splendid scenery; I shall not be particular about my viands, or my lodging, and you will see me return quite well, and with a portfolio full of sketches."

General Mentilla shook his head.

"If you had a sufficient escort I should not mind your going," he said; "but alone to venture among these scarcely civilised people I think an imprudent scheme."

"Imprudent" or not, Hector had set his mind on going, and go he did. He knew that poor Adela would be well taken care of, that it would be long before he could hear again from Minna, or receive his appointment from England, and how better spend his time than in visiting scenes of grandeur and beauty unknown in the Old World?

General Paez gave him an introduction to the chief of one of the most powerful Indian tribes on the Orinoco; and provided with this as his credentials, he took leave of his Caraccas friends, and set off on his perilous journey.

He was delighted with the country through which he passed—a country rich in all the magnificence and beauty of nature. The hand of cultivation was here nowhere to be seen, except on the small patches of land attached to the Indian villages, themselves most picturesque. But Nature required no help from art or the exertions of man. It stood as it had been formed by the great Creator of the universe. The mountains and the valleys, the rivers and the forests, all showed the power of God, and the mind must have been darkened indeed which did not exclaim:

Oh Lord! how glorious are Thy works!

Hector first visited the town of Cumana, of which he expected soon to become an inhabitant. It is charmingly situated between the Castle of St. Antonio and the small rivers Manzanares and Santa Catalina. The country lying between these rivers is extremely fertile, and abounds in plantain, mammee, and other fruit-trees. At Cumana, which is hardly more than a mile from the sea-shore, the inhabitants have the benefit of the cool and refreshing sea-breezes. They are very fond of swimming, and even the ladies excel in that art.

The port of Cumana is capable of containing a great number of ships—in fact, more than half the navies of Europe might ride there in safety.

The whole of the Gulf of Cariaco, which is thirty-five miles in length and sixty-eight in breadth, affords excellent anchorage. Cumana is considered one of the hottest places in the New World, but it is not so hot as La Guayra, the seaport of Caraccas, where the heat is absolutely stifling. The situation of La Guayra is singular. The chain of hills which separates this port, or rather roadstead, from the high valley of Caraccas, descends almost directly into the sea, and the houses are backed by a wall of steep rocks. The aspect of the place is gloomy and solitary; the yellow fever often prevails there. The road from La Guayra to Caraccas resembles the passage over the Alps, and is a very fatiguing journey, whether performed on mules or on foot.

In a portion of the Gulf of Cariaco, it may be mentioned, there are hot springs gushing from the bottom of the sea, which raise the temperature of the water where they exist.

In speaking of the gigantic forests of South America, the celebrated traveller, Baron von Humboldt, has said:

"When a traveller, newly arrived from Europe, penetrates for the first time into the forests of South America, Nature presents itself to him under an unexpected aspect; if he feels strongly the beauty of picturesque scenery, he can scarcely define the various emotions that crowd on his mind; he can scarcely distinguish what most excites his admiration—the deep silence of those solitudes, the individual beauty and contrast of forms, or that vigour and freshness of vegetable life which characterise the climate of the tropics. The trunks of the trees are concealed under a thick carpet of verdure of the same lianas, that, creeping from the ground, reach the tops of the trees, and pass from one to another at the height of more than one hundred feet."

One can walk for hours under the sheltering shade of these verdant and flowery arcades, that scarcely admit a glimpse of the sky.

Numerous parrots and macaws are met with in these forests. The latter fly only in pairs, while the parrots wander about in flocks of several hundreds. Where *they* are there is no silence, and their hoarse cries are sometimes so loud as even to drown the noise of the torrents which rush down from rock ro rock.

Our West India traveller was charmed with all the grandeur and loveliness of the almost unknown country he was traversing. He was hospitably received at the Indian villages where missions had been established, and was surprised to find the inside of the Indian huts extremely clean. Their hammocks, their mats of reeds, their pots for cassada and fermented maize, their bows and arrows, everything was arranged with the greatest order. The condition of the women, as in all semi-barbarous nations or tribes, was a state of privation and suffering, and the hardest labour fell to their share.

Proceeding farther on, Hector came to wilder scenery and less civilised Indians. Still he was not ill received, but he appeared to be an object of great curiosity. At length he reached the abode of the tribe to whose chief Paez had given him an introductory missive. The chief was very gracious to him, and invited him to a *palaver* and a dinner. The palaver was rather a curious affair, the head chief and the inferior warriors and sages of the tribe placing themselves in a circle, and uttering now and then a few words, in an accent that seemed very strange

to Hector's unpractised ear. What was the subject of their discourse he could not divine, but he perceived by the glances cast at him that his presence among them had something to do with it. The members of the assemblage were not exactly stern-looking, but assuredly grave and gloomy-looking men. No symptom of violence or even of rudeness was shown towards him, and when the meeting broke up the feast was served.

Among the dishes presented to the stranger guest was some very fine fish, not, of course, caught in the sea, but river fish, with the accompaniment of an excellent sauce. Hector partook of this dainty, and praised it very much. But what was his horror when the chief, with a smile, informed him that the sauce he thought so good was made from the bones of a human hand!*

Poor Hector was shocked and disgusted, and became so ill that he was obliged to retire to the hut which had been assigned to him as his sleeping quarters, and had nearly got an attack of the jaundice. He would eat no more fish, flesh, or fowl among this cannibal tribe, but subsisted while remaining with them on cassada, vegetables, and fruit; and thankful he was when he was furnished with a guide to pursue his journey.

But it would have been better for him had he retraced his steps, and been satisfied with what he had already seen of this superb country and its wild inhabitants. Some adventurous travellers in the interior of South America, indeed, escaped unhurt through the difficulties and dangers they encountered;† but poor Hector was not so fortunate. He had heard much of a wonderful cave, or grotto, which was held by the natives in great reverence and awe, and he felt a strong desire to explore its mysteries. There was a missionary station not far from this place, and to the Roman Catholic priest who presided over this mission he applied for assistance in carrying out his wishes. The superior of the little Christian Society tried to persuade him not to attempt penetrating into the cave, into which he himself had never ventured to descend; but as Hector insisted on visiting it the priest spoke to the chief of the Indians residing in its vicinity, who was also *the medicine-man* of the tribe. The Indians at this place, though permitting the missionaries to reside in the neighbourhood, and assuming to be Christians because they had learned to make the sign of the cross, were nevertheless still pagans at heart. They were full of superstitions, and though they held in reverence their "Great Father," the Creator of heaven and earth, and gave thanksgivings to the inferior good spirits who were employed by him, they stood in great dread of the evil spirits which, according to them, pervaded the universe. The cave which Hector was so anxious to visit was given out to be the haunt of some one or more of these evil spirits, and the chief of the tribe pretended to hold communication sometimes with this or these malignant beings, who gave their oracular answers when certain rites were performed. No stranger might dare to enter this mysterious

* Fact. This incident actually happened to a friend of the author's while travelling in the interior of South America, near the Orinoco, some years ago.

† Among these travellers may be named Baron von Humboldt and his party; and at a later period, those enterprising and scientific gentlemen, Sir Robert Schomburgck and Captain Smyth, R.N., with both of whom the writer of this little tale was well acquainted.

cavern. If he did it was at the peril of his life, for the presiding deity of the place would not brook intrusion on his earthly abode.

Hector laughed in his sleeve at all this folly, as he called it, though he was too polite and too politic to laugh openly. But he persisted in pressing his request, until the Indian medicine-man gave way, and agreed to send a couple of guides with him, charging him and them, however, not to try to penetrate far beyond the mouth of the cave.

Crossing a plain covered with rich turf, the traveller and his guides approached a high hill, thickly covered with tall trees. At the base of this hill was the mouth of the sacred cave. A mass of rock projected over the entrance, on which grew gigantic trees, with creeping plants waving in the winds, and forming festoons before the opening to the cavern. Even to the interior some of the creeping plants had made their way, and their verdure contrasted strangely with the dark grey wall of rock on either side. The vaulted mouth of the cavern appeared to be about seventy feet high, and was wide in proportion; but the grotto, though still large, became narrower as its visitors advanced forward. They had light for some time through the vestibule, or portal; but at length it began to fail, and all became obscure around.

Then were heard from afar the hoarse cries of the nocturnal birds which inhabit that extraordinary cave, and with those was mingled the sound of rushing waters. On lighting torches they found themselves on the low, half-rocky, half-muddy and slimy banks of a subterranean river, which, at the entrance to the cave had appeared a mere rill, tumbling down from crevices in the outer rock. Hector and the guides walked occasionally on the sometimes narrow, sometimes broader, but always jagged rock, occasionally in the bed of the stream, which for a certain distance was not more than two feet in depth.

Some of the birds flew out of their funnel-shaped nests situated high, high up in the dark rocky walls, and saluted the intruders on their lonely domain with discordant cries, which frightened the timid Indian guides. Hector could perceive that the plumage of the birds was a dark bluish grey, with streaks and spots of black and white. Their eyes were blue, and apparently hurt by the glare of the torches, for these birds never leave the cavern until nightfall. Frightful as was the noise of their hoarse screams, and the flapping of their dusky wings, the echo of their cries in the far away interior was still more appalling. The guides suddenly stood still, listened attentively, and then exclaimed that it was the voices of the evil spirits chiding them for being there. They could not be induced to remain longer in the cave, so Hector, snatching the torch from one of them, resolutely went forward himself. He found that the cavern became narrower, the vaulted roof lower, and the subterranean river broader, as he advanced. At length he was brought to a stand by what sounded like a waterfall, and bending forwards, while he waved his solitary torch about to throw light upon the spot, he perceived that he was on the brink of a cascade, and that the hitherto by no means impetuous river fell foaming over a steep descent in the rocks before him!

To proceed farther was impossible; there was nothing for it, therefore, but to retrace his steps to the mouth of the cave, and he was not sorry when he once more emerged from its deep gloom into the cheerful light of day.

"Oh, blessed sun!" he exclaimed, as he gazed upon its joyous beams playing among the foliage of the trees and the flowers of the vines, and sparkling upon the bright waters of the little rills that ran murmuring by, making fairy music to the ear: "oh, blessed sun! how glorious thou art! How thankful I am to bask again in thy brilliant rays!"

Hector apostrophised the sun with almost as much unction as his Indian guides could have done—they who believed the great luminary to contain the abode and the throne of their primeval God!

IV.

GLOOMY EVENTS, BEARING OUT THE SPIRIT'S PROPHECY.

THE important letters from Caraccas, informing Mr. St. Clair and his family of the existence and illness of poor Adela, and conveying General Mentilla's confession of his private marriage with Linda, reached in due time their destination, and almost overpowering were the mingled feelings of surprise, consternation, and pleasure which they created.

To know that their deeply-mourned, and as they thought lost, Adela was still alive, caused a sensation of almost wild joy among the family. Their dearest Adela! They would see her again on this earth—she had not gone before them to the world beyond the grave; she would be restored to them and their affectionate care, and brighter days might dawn for her! Then came the chilling after-thought that she had, according to the ideas of the world, disgraced herself by following in disguise strangers upon whom she had no claim. Mr. St. Clair felt this most keenly, more than his daughters did, although Linda was overwhelmed with sorrow at her sister's fatal mistake and infatuation.

As to poor Linda herself and her misdeeds, her kind father was very lenient, but he was exceedingly angry with his sister, Mrs. Rivers, for the part she had acted in the clandestine marriage of his daughter.

He said, with much justice, that had the truth been told to him he would have endeavoured to have put everything to rights, and all the misery and mortification which had ensued from the system of concealment pursued would have been avoided.

Poor Mrs. Rivers could only plead her acquiescence in Linda's and Mentilla's wishes, and Linda herself pleaded her love for the charming South American officer, and her fear that her father might have given him as cold a reception as he did Don Alonzo Alvaez. The warm-hearted old gentleman could not resist the tears of his favourite daughter, and he wrote a kind letter to General Mentilla, in which, though he blamed their secret marriage, he expressed his willingness to acknowledge it, and his pleasure in his daughter's alliance with so superior and distinguished a man.

He further wrote that he and his daughters, Linda and Minna, would come to Caraccas as soon as possible; that Linda might be there re-married to General Mentilla, and left with him, while he himself should proceed with his two other daughters, Adela and Minna, to England for a time. The entire change of climate and society, he thought, might be useful to Adela, and he hoped that Hector might be persuaded to accompany them to Europe.

The good old gentleman signified that he would be happy to bear all the expenses of the party.

But—"Man proposes, and God disposes!" How often are not the best-laid plans frustrated, the simplest and apparently wisest arrangements set at nought!

Mr. St. Clair and his two younger daughters arrived at La Guayra and Caraccas only to meet with disappointment and distress.

To Minna's great chagrin, her dear Hector was away, travelling in the interior, and no letters had been received from him since he had left Cumana. But General Mentilla assured her that he had only gone on a tour into the interior of the country to while away the time until he could hear from her, that there were no post-offices in that wild part of the country, but he would certainly return soon without being announced by letter.

The disappointment of the party who had just arrived from the West Indies in regard to Adela was still greater, for they found her labouring not only under severe bodily illness, but also under aberration of mind. It was a terrible shock to her poor father to see her in this sad condition, and Linda blamed herself greatly for not having acquainted Adela with her private marriage, the knowledge of which would probably have prevented her embarking on so wild an adventure.

The doctors, for more than one were now consulted, could hold out no hope of the poor girl's recovery, and, indeed, if she were to continue insane, prolonged life would be no blessing to herself or her family.

Fearing that poor Adela's death might soon occur, Mr. St. Clair thought it best to have Linda's and General Mentilla's marriage confirmed by the ceremony being performed a second time. It was a very quiet wedding, however, and only a few guests were present at it. But among these few were General Bolivar and Admiral Brion.

Mentilla's marriage to the West Indian stranger occasioned many heart-burnings in Venezuela, where three or four damsels and more than one young widow had tried and hoped to appropriate the handsome patriot chief. His own distinguished relatives were quite satisfied with his choice, and received Linda into their circle with the utmost kindness. So far all was well, and Linda would have been perfectly happy but for the unfortunate state of her self-deluded sister. At first she could not bear even to glance at Adela's folly in her conversation with General Mentilla, but he touched so delicately on the subject, yet still seemed so anxious to exonerate himself from blame and from the very shadow of faithlessness to Linda, that at last she spoke to him with less reserve, and together they lamented her strange delusion.

"But how came it, Diego?" asked Linda one day of her husband, when they were sitting alone together in a fragrant arbour at the farthest extremity of his garden—"how came it that you did not recognise poor Adela even under the disguise she had assumed? Harry St. Clair was like her certainly, but he was darker, of course, and his features were not so fine as hers."

"I wonder now myself that I did not recognise her," replied Mentilla. "But it never entered my brain that your sister could have imagined and carried out such a . . . a . . . I must say, a reckless and madlike scheme. I knew that the poor boy St. Clair, who, no doubt, was drowned, was

anxious to leave his native island, and accompany us to South America, where he wished to enter the army. The pretended Enrico spoke with the drawling accent so peculiar to the coloured people, and if Alvaez, who was Adela's devoted admirer, did not find her out under her disguise, it was not likely that *I*, whose thoughts were always fixed upon you, should do so. Hector Graham had his doubts from the first time he saw my page. You must recollect, also, that I had only seen the real Harry St. Clair twice or so, and then had not particularly noticed him. My own belief is, that the poor girl was under the influence of incipient madness when she entered on the strange adventure which has ended so sadly."

"I was very, very wrong," said Linda, with tears rolling down her cheeks, "not to have told her of your—of our attachment to each other."

"She would not have believed in my attachment to you, dearest Linda. Poor Adela was so accustomed to the incense of flattery, and thought so much of the power of her beauty, that she would not have credited anything you had said. You are noway to blame, nor am I."

The unfortunate Adela became worse and worse, nor did she ever recover her intellect. She did not know her father or sisters; but in her dying moments, which were calm and peaceful, she spoke of her dear father, and her hope to meet him in a better world. She passed from mortal life into eternal life in her sleep; a quiet and painless death! Her father and her sisters grieved for her death, but not so intensely as they had done when they thought she had been drowned in the harbour of the little town near Clair Hall; for they knew that, had she escaped the jaws of the grave, it would only have been to have led a life of wretchedness and disappointment, and they thanked the merciful God who had spared her this.

They had only just returned from her funeral when General Mentilla, in whose house they were then staying, received a letter from the superior of a monastery at Cumana. He opened it carelessly, but had not glanced over more than a few lines, when he became deadly pale, and, rising suddenly, he hurried out of the room.

"Some bad news, I fear!" exclaimed Mr. St. Clair. "I hope the royalists are not going to attack the Venezuelans again."

It was now Linda's turn to become pale, and she felt like to faint at the bare idea of her dear Mentilla being engaged in all the horrors and dangers of war. Minna observed her emotion, and cried:

"Oh, papa! it is impossible that these royalists should cause any more disturbance here. If there had been the least chance of this, General Bolivar must have known it, and he would not have lost a minute in sending for Mentilla, his great friend and principal adviser."

Some time having elapsed, however, since Mentilla's sudden disappearance, Linda, who felt very uneasy about him, ventured to seek him. She found him in his private cabinet. He was sitting at the writing-table, with his head resting on one hand, an open letter lying before him, on which his tears were slowly dropping.

"Diego! What is the matter? What causes you this deep distress?" cried Linda, hastening towards him, and timidly placing her hand on his shoulder.

"This letter has brought very bad news, my darling!" replied the general, in a very low voice.

"Bad news! what—what? Oh, Mentilla, is the frightful civil war to begin anew, and your precious life to be again endangered?"

"No, dearest Linda," said Mentilla, with a melancholy smile. "The superior of a peaceful monastery would not be the first to communicate to me tidings of approaching war. No; but the tidings are full of evil. It is most painful for me to be obliged to be the bearer of them to you and yours."

"Do these tidings concern Hector?" asked Linda, hurriedly.

"They do, my Linda. You must nerve yourself to hear sad, sad news; news that will crush hope and happiness in the young heart of our dear Minna, alas!"

"Speak! He is not surely dead?" cried Linda, clasping her hands, and trembling from head to foot.

General Mentilla drew a chair close to his own, and placing her in it, threw his arm round her waist, while he almost whispered to her:

"This letter tells of death. Hector, poor Hector, is no more!'

"My God—my God!" half shrieked Linda, her head falling on General Mentilla's shoulder. "What a terrible calamity! My poor, poor Minna, how will she bear his loss!"

"It is terrible indeed!" said Mentilla; "and how cruel to think that he might have been alive and well now, but for a fatal curiosity, and that fearlessness of disposition which induced him to slight the warnings he received, and to ridicule as chimerical the danger in which he was told he would place himself."

General Mentilla then related to Linda, as had been written to him by the superior of the monastery at Cumana, Hector's journey into the interior; his reaching some Indian settlements on the banks of a branch of the Orinoco; his short residence with the Roman Catholic missionaries there; and his determination to explore a wonderful cavern in the neighbourhood, which was held in great awe by the Indians, and said to be the haunt of evil spirits when they chose to visit this earth. Mentilla told her how the missionaries had entreated him not to attempt entering this mysterious cave; and how the chiefs of the tribe had also impressed on him the danger of intruding on the spirits of darkness, who sometimes sought its secret recesses, and who could not be approached except by the Indian priests, with solemn ceremonies and propitiatory offerings.

Hector, he went on, would not listen to their arguments and exhortations, but was determined to see the interior of this remarkable cavern, through which a subterranean river flowed. He had at last overcome all objections, and been provided with two guides carrying torches. But they had fled in dismay on hearing some strange noises from the far interior of the cave—noises which Hector declared to be only the echo of the cries of the nocturnal birds who inhabited the grotto, but which the Indians fancied were angry chidings of the spirits of evil. The abbot further told that when Hector, who had continued to explore the cave alone, returned to its mouth, he felt a good deal fatigued, and very thirsty; and on passing the dwelling of the chief, on his way to the little missionary station, he had been invited to come in and rest awhile, which he accordingly did. The Indian chief had bustled about to get him

something to drink, and had presented to him, in a calabash, a pleasant and refreshing beverage, which he drank eagerly.

Soon after arriving at the huts occupied by the missionaries, he became drowsy and ill; the illness increased rapidly, and none of the simple remedies with which the fathers were acquainted were of any use to him. He died that very evening, with all the appearance of having been poisoned!

The missionaries thought it was possible that he had died from the effects of the noxious vapours of the cave; but they considered it much more likely that he had been poisoned by the Indian chief, who had offered him a beverage to assuage his thirst. Not that the chief could have entertained any enmity to the stranger, but that he deemed it necessary, in order to keep up his own prestige with the tribe, to prove that no one but himself and his immediate satellites dare penetrate, unscathed, beyond the mouth of the mysterious cavern, or venture to approach its gloomy recesses.*

Whether poor Hector was poisoned or not, it was certain that he died at that wild spot near the mighty Orinoco, and that he was buried under a silk cotton-tree in the grounds of the humble missionary settlement.

It was a dreadful revelation to make to Mr. St. Clair, and still worse to poor Minna. But there was no evading it, and General Mentilla and Linda broke it to them as well as they could.

Minna at first refused to believe in the truth of the report conveyed from the Cumana monastery, and when she *did* admit it, her whole soul was devoted to the idea of vengeance on the murderer of her beloved Hector.

He must be sought for, he must be tried, convicted of murder, and punished for his crime.

"Yes, yes, Mentilla!" she cried, "if you had any friendship for my dearest Hector, if you have any feeling for me, if you love Linda, punish the ruffian who caused his death!"

It was with difficulty that she was brought to believe that in this unfortunate case retribution would be sought in vain; that the Indians living on the borders and banks of the Orinoco were not then under subjection either to the royalists or the patriots; that they were independent tribes, governed by their own chiefs, and not amenable to the laws of their white neighbours. Nothing could be done but to deplore the early death of their dear friend, and it *was* most deeply deplored. Poor Minna's excitement soon vanished, and her grief became even deeper than at first, but more subdued.

"Papa," she said, "let us give up going to England. Adela is dead, Hector is dead; Linda will remain here with her husband. Why should you and I encounter the noise and gaiety of London, into which neither of us can enter with any satisfaction? No, let us go to our quiet home, there to live among the memories of the past!"

And it was so determined. Linda, the only happy and fortunate member of the family, was left with her affectionate husband, General Mentilla; and the broken-down old man, Mr. St. Clair, and his afflicted

* Such was really the fate of a young West Indian gentleman who was travelling on the banks of the Orinoco, and insisted on exploring a mysterious cave, which the Indians in its vicinity were taught to hold in superstitious awe.

daughter, the once so gay and joyous Minna, returned to their now solitary island home, to grieve over the past, and to wait in humble submission the summons from the great Arbiter of human events to join the dear spirits which had passed before them into the unknown realms beyond the gloomy grave.

"Ah!" said Mr. St. Clair to himself, "I was wrong—very wrong! Why did I neglect the warning given me by the Indian spirit yon night in the haunted forest? It told me that evil was hanging over us—it exhorted me to avoid the strangers. It predicted not only the downfal of our poor West India islands, but hinted at calamities which might overtake my own family. Why was I so deaf and blind? Had I not given these South American strangers so warm a welcome, Adela would not have died as she did; Hector's life would not have been sacrificed as it has been; Linda would still have been a blessing to our home, and the ornament of our island; and poor Minna would not have become the broken-hearted creature that she is now! To us the prediction of evil has been indeed too true. May it not also be felt in its fullest extent in our dear islands? I fear that ruin is hovering over them; that the sins of the first invaders of these once happy lands may be visited on the races and generations which have succeeded them. The great governments of Europe who possess colonies here care little now for their West India settlements; there are even now some in the so-called mother country to whom the name of a white West Indian is a reproach, and who have no sympathy except for the negro race. Fanaticism will be one powerful weapon against us, and official neglect another. But let me close my eyes on the sad prospects for the future, and remember that

Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof!"

DIEPPE.

What are the wild waves saying,
Sister, the whole day long?

The above lines, hackneyed as they are, and associated too much in one's mind with sentimental young lady singers with weak "trebles," have yet an unwearied charm to us, suggesting, as they do, the hidden meaning which lies in the forms and colouring of our beautiful surrounding world, more especially in that ever-fresh yet ever-varying wonder of God's creation—the ocean.

Such is the tenor of our thoughts on this bright summer's day, as we sit on the shore of the favourite French watering-place whose name stands at the head of this paper, watching broad cloud-shadows as they flit over the blue expanse which stretches away before us without seeming limit, while at our feet the restless billows alternately thunder with a hoarse roar, as they sweep the loose rattling stones along, or subside into low musical murmurs on the beach. It is a day eminently fitted for laziness, when any active exertion is positively painful to contemplate under the blazing rays of a continental sun, such as is seldom or never experienced in our cloudier, and perhaps less fortunate climate. There is a

hot glare from the white chalky cliffs which bound the shore as far as the eye can reach, broken only by the valley at whose "embouchure" Dieppe is situated, with its spacious green esplanade, bordered on the town side by rows of handsome hotels and lodging-houses. The possession of the sea-side of this extensive green is divided between the nymphs of the bath, who, during several hours in the day, cover every available spot with bathing-linen, &c., and tiny regiments of children, accompanied by their "bonnes," or English nursemaids, as the case may be. These young people rear castles in the sand, or, may be, dig shifting graves for their companions with equal glee, rejoicing, as children of every clime and nation do, in the sea-treasures flung lavishly across their path—no more worthless, perhaps, than the trifles which will in a few years absorb the minds and lives of these future actors in the great drama of life.

At one extremity of the esplanade stands the Grand Etablissement des Bains, as it is somewhat magniloquently termed; but this passion for superlative phraseology is eminently French, and probably conveys no more extravagance of idea to our neighbours' minds than the less striking appellations in use with us. This structure is chiefly composed of iron and glass, and bears some resemblance (to compare smaller things with great) to the Crystal Palace at Sydenham. It comprises a very commodious reading-room and handsome circular ball-room, where at night a fine though somewhat noisy band "discourses sweet music" to the votaries of Terpsichore.

Connected with the building are the bathing-boxes, &c., for both ladies and gentlemen—sea-bathing being, like most other businesses of life in this country, carried on "en société," and suitable costumes are consequently "de rigueur." At the farther extremity of the "plage," as Dieppois term their esplanade, a wooden jetty runs out to some distance, terminated by a lighthouse, most needful as a beacon to steamers and other vessels approaching this dangerous coast. The entrance to the harbour of Dieppe lies between this jetty and a wooden barrier which has been constructed exactly opposite—a welcome haven to the storm-tossed fishing-boats, whose owners dare the treacherous waters of the Channel in pursuit of their precarious livelihood.

This summer's day, however, the light and laughing waves give no inkling of the fierce storms which later in the season rage along this coast, and which render the packet-service from Newhaven to Dieppe, in winter, if not the most dangerous, at any rate the least agreeable of any route we are acquainted with. On either side of the wooden jetty, where it joins *terra firma*, is placed a colossal cross, upon which is sculptured, in painful reality, the figure of the dying Redeemer, and weeping at His feet His mourning mother. No fisherman enters or leaves the harbour without uncovering his head when passing this representation of the stupendous mystery of Redemption.

It is not difficult (we may here remark) to understand how, with this uneducated yet warm-hearted race of men, the Mariolatry of the Church of Rome took deep root; banished for days and weeks at a time from their humble homes and the society of woman, how natural for their human affections, ever longing for an object on which to dwell, to turn with superstitious fondness, and, unhappily, adoration, towards her whom tradition and legends innumerable had invested with every beauty of feature and womanly grace, combining with this the familiar idea of a

mother's intercessory power over her son. No wonder that the sailor and fisherman named her "Star of the Sea!"

It is amusing to stroll along the quay which surrounds the old harbour of Dieppe, and view the quaint houses of this part of the town, with their high-pitched roofs, so different from the modern Parisian hotels, but a few paces distant. Here, too, are to be seen, in all their glory, the fish-wives of the port, who equal, if they do not excel, their sisters elsewhere in volubility of language and extortion, and who, next to the bathing-women, perhaps, form the most important section of the population of this marine resort.

But here we are at the market-place, a spacious square off the Grande Rue, bounded at one side by the handsome old church of St. Jacques, well known, doubtless, to most frequenters of the Royal Academy's Exhibitions. Though irregular in outline, and disfigured by sundry "restorations," this church is rich in sculptured stone ornaments, and its lofty square tower has a singularly fine effect, rising majestically above its surroundings: the rich sweet tones of the deep-voiced bell are now reminding the "faithful" that it is the noontide hour of prayer, and we may remark, *en passant*, that this solemn but deeply-harmonious bell is among our most vivid and pleasing memories of Dieppe. For a detailed account of St. Jacques, and the other ecclesiastical buildings of this town, we would refer the visitor to an excellent little Guide Book, published by Marais, whose library is in the Grande Rue. Our morning's walk has freshened appetite not a little, and we are tempted to invest in a delicious cream cheese, offered to us by a brown-faced Normandy peasant, for the small sum of twopence. This, with salad and a cucumber, thrown in as a douceur to our bargain, will form a pleasant lunch this hot day, combined with a bottle of vin rouge, and we accordingly turn our steps from the market-place to our lodgings at the house of the excellent Madame P.

This worthy landlady of ours deserves a passing notice, as a specimen of the "genus" in France, which presents many features differing from the English "lodging-house keeper." Madame P. possesses all the politesse for which her country-people are remarkable, and is always ready with a kindly greeting as we go forth from, or re-enter, her domicile in the Rue de la Plage.

"Monsieur must have had a charming walk. Ah! Dieppe is bien gentil; all the world come here in the summer. Paris itself is triste after a sojourn in this queen of sea-towns." This, and much more, she details with a vivacity and easy manner so different from the laboured remarks and dreary reminiscences of her past history, with which her English counterpart generally regales you; for with us this member of society has, as a rule, "seen better days," and usually labours under a sense of injury from some person or persons unknown. Madame P.'s husband is a quiet old man, who always seconds his wife's civilities with a smile, as he touches his worn cap with a semi-military salute, acquired, doubtless, in his young days, when a militaire under the Great Napoleon (at least so he tells us).

Our apartments "au premier" are unpretending but pleasant rooms, and the fresh breeze from the Channel sweeps refreshingly in through the jalousied windows, the shade of which is so grateful in this summer glare. Nearly opposite is a mysterious "bureau de police," where, till a

late hour at night, lights are burning, and upon the steps of which sundry bearded gens d'armes are constantly lounging, reminding one that they are in a land of espionage, and under the eye of that wonderful "l'Empereur!"

The story above us is occupied at present by an English lady and her maid, respecting whom we form various conjectures. The former rarely becomes visible until the afternoon, when we occasionally meet her descending our common staircase, always well dressed and faultlessly "gantée," with pretty, though rather pensive, features. Mrs. A. is decidedly what might be termed "interesting," and we somehow fancy there is a "history" connected with her. Madame P. informs us that monsieur, her husband, lives in Italy, not with Mrs. A., whom she thinks charming, and who speaks French—ah! like an angel! An interchange of passing civilities with Mrs. A. confirms our pleasing impressions of her, and we find some amusement in the volubility of her maid, who labours under confused notions of the use of her own letter H, declaring her own preference for the "Henglish" watering-places, among which her favourites are "Heastbourne" and "'Astings"—poor letter H! On the whole, we feel lonely when Mrs. A. and her maid take their departure from "la seconde," and leave us sole occupants of the "Maison P.," as our landlady's premises are somewhat ambitiously termed by her acquaintances of the shops.

One of the chief attractions attending a sojourn at Dieppe are to be found in excursions to the various country villages and places of interest in its vicinity. Foremost among these may be named the village and Château of Arques, the scene in days past of one of Henri IV.'s celebrated battles. The road thither leads inland from Dieppe, bordered by meadows, reclaimed many generations back from the sea, which formerly seems to have flowed up this valley, over the ground where part of Dieppe now stands, as far as the more ancient town of Arques. This is a pretty, quaint village, adorned with a fine church, belonging to the style of architecture usual in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Though not "pure Gothic," the general effect of the building is very pleasing, and some of the stone carving very rich in ornament. As we rest a few moments on one of the mounds, where, perhaps, some

Rude forefather of the hamlet sleeps,

our attention is drawn to a group of children, who are playing about the stile which separates the church path from the high road. How bright and happy they seem, as they pause to look at some particular spot in the "God's acre," where, perhaps, some young companion is laid, shaded by graceful willows and a few autumn roses! It has often struck us how, in the happy faces and guileless smiles of the very young we may see that faint image of the Creator mirrored, in which He first made man, and which so often caused the loving heart of the Redeemer to yearn towards them, while He trod this earth.

The respect paid by our continental neighbours to the last resting-places of their dead certainly contrasts strangely with the indifference and neglect even, with which burying-grounds are regarded too often among ourselves, though in this matter, as in many other points, we have of late years "taken a leaf" with advantage from the code of foreign manners and customs.

The ascent to the hill upon which the Château d'Arques is situated is very steep, but the view from thence fully repays the fatigue of climbing. The walls, formed of a mixture of chalk blocks and flint stones, are now fast crumbling to decay, and in a few years the castle will only exist as a shapeless heap of masonry, overgrown with ivy and underwood. The space within the castle walls is covered with greensward, carefully tended, and seats are placed here and there for the convenience of visitors. How peaceful and bright is the prospect on this summer's afternoon? In the foreground lie the church and village of Arques, with their busy hum of country life, while at about a mile's distance we can trace the outlines of the battle-field once so memorable in the history of this land. Fields of corn now wave over the graves of buried thousands, and, where once was the rush of the war-steed and the agonised cry of the wounded and dying, smiling orchards, laden with rich autumn promise, tell of plenty and peace, while the distant perspective of this picture is closed by the blue waters of the Channel, now softly blending with the azure tints of heaven.

Another favourite excursion in the vicinity of Dieppe is to the village of Varengeville, and, farther still, to the lighthouse called Phare d'Ailly. It is more especially of the former that we wish to recal the remembrance, as the situation of the lighthouse, though grand and commanding (standing, as it does, upon a point of land overlooking the boiling waves of the Channel), is somewhat bleak and dreary.

But Varengeville is a beautiful specimen of a Norman country hamlet, embowered in roses, and its houses nestling in orchards abounding in mellow fruit. Sombre avenues of tall stately trees are here, leading to ancient manor-houses, many of which, alas! are now decayed, or turned to base purposes of farm-yards and granaries. A quiet winding lane leads us to a wicket gate, which opens on the enclosure surrounding the ancient church of this place, respecting which a legend is related, that originally the inhabitants of Varengeville tried to build the sacred edifice upon a site in the midst of their village, but during the night the stones were removed by a certain Saint Valery, apostle of these regions, and fixed where they now stand. The situation is wildly beautiful, overlooking the waste of waters now sleeping calmly in the sunlight, but in tempestuous winter days lashed in furious billows against the cliffs beneath, the storm-worn walls and windows of the church attesting the force which the elements, let loose, can exercise here. Even here some few carefully tended flowers bloom on rustic graves, and it would be scarcely possible to imagine a more romantic spot in which to lay the weary head and life-worn limbs when it is time: soft, low winds would in spring and summer-time waft the odours of sweet wild flowers across the lowly bed from breezy downs, while all the year through the sea would sing a requiem, whether in the mighty diapason of the tempest's roar, or the low music of the wavelet as it murmurs along the beach.

As the autumn days draw on we are obliged to confine our rambles more exclusively to the town and its immediate vicinity. In the evenings the Etablissement des Bains forms a never-failing source of amusement to visitors. Here about eight o'clock, on "dancing nights," a mixed crowd of French, English, Russian, and various other European nationalities assemble (the English always predominating), and "chase the flying hours with rapid feet," French girls being generally conspicuous

by their graceful movements and more elegant *tournure*, though, in respect of personal advantages, our fair countrywomen bear the palm, in our opinion. But it is in conversation more especially that our continental neighbours shine, and, owing to the habit of living "in society" from a very early age, even children acquire the habits and address of "le bon ton." On one occasion, a "bal d'enfans" gave us the opportunity of seeing these tiny men and women perform their parts with most perfect grace and precision, the only drawback perhaps, in our eyes, being the extreme *oldness* of the proceedings.

There are many odd nooks and corners in this old town of Dieppe which one might employ many a leisure hour in exploring. The quarter of the town specially devoted to the fishing race is, perhaps, the most quaint and original of its kind in existence. Separated from Dieppe only by a narrow stream spanned by a slight bridge, the Quartier le Pollet gives evidence on every side of its being the home of a totally distinct race from its fashionable neighbour. There is a flavour of the sea about Le Pollet, and its inhabitants seem to be of an amphibious nature, even the wives and daughters of the fishermen being equally qualified with their husbands or brothers to handle an oar or tow their fishing-smacks up the narrow channel of Dieppe harbour. Most of the houses in this quaint suburb have an old and rickety look, and are chiefly constructed with great beams of dark wood, jutting out from which are sundry curious shop and inn signs, while in queer little niches sunk in the house walls here and there are miserable painted images of the Virgin and Child, adorned with some poor frippery, or, perchance, illuminated at night by a flickering lamp; for Le Pollet is eminently religious in its way.

The "season" at Dieppe closes about the 15th of October, when the greater portion of the visitors take flight to their homes in various and widely distant lands, or seek a more genial winter climate in Italy or along the Mediterranean. The few stragglers who remain are liable to fall in with violent storms, which prevail at this time of year along the shores of the English Channel. This was our case, and seldom have we witnessed more tempestuous weather than raged along the coast during the concluding days of October. As no packet could brave the storm for some days, our town was filled with unhappy travellers arrived from Paris *en route* to "perfide Albion," who wandered impatiently about the streets or upon the quays, consulting any stray mariner they met as to the probability of a change in the state of affairs, while doubtless the hotel-keepers improved the opportunity at the expense of their victims' pockets.

Before taking leave of Dieppe and its many pleasing souvenirs, we must not omit to mention the ivory carvings, for which the place has a spécialité. Few leave without carrying with them specimens of this beautiful and artistic work, as well as of figures, generally of a most amusing description, modelled in brown clay, and which can be bought at any of the shops for these kind of wares, which abound in the Grande Rue and its vicinity.

But it is time for us to bid adieu to la belle France for this year, for winter comes on apace, when there is no place like our "ain fireside," and as we steam out of harbour many a lingering look is cast back to the sunny skies of Normandy and its pleasant old town of Dieppe.

L. H. C.

FOXHOLME HALL;

OR,

HOLIDAYS AT AN OLD COUNTRY HOUSE.

CHAPTER I.

WE had our choice given us whether we would spend our Christmas holidays with our most kind and estimable old relative, our mother's cousin, Miss Gillespie, in Russell-square, and go to the theatre and panoramas, and other highly edifying entertainments, or at Foxholme, in the New Forest, with our great-uncle, Sir Hugh Worsley. "Foxholme for ever, I should think indeed!" exclaimed my brother Jack, making a face which was not complimentary to cousin Barbara. "But she is a good kind old soul, if she wasn't so pokerish and prim; and that was a dead-alive fortnight we spent with her two winters ago. I say Foxholme for ever!" "Foxholme for ever!" I repeated. "Of course there couldn't be the thinnest slice of a shadow of doubt about the matter. There'll be cousin Peter, and Julia, and Tom and Ned Oxenberry, and Sam Barnby, and Ponto, and Hector, and Beauty, and Polly; and there'll be hunting, and shooting, and skating, if there's a frost—and of course there will be a frost—and, oh, it will be such jolly fun!"

A few weeks after this we were bowling along the road to Southampton on the top of the old Telegraph, driven by Taylor—as fine a specimen of a Jehu as ever took whip in hand—with four white horses—a team of which he was justly proud. I see him now before me, his fine tall figure, truly Roman nose, and eagle eye looking as fit to command an army as to drive a coach, with his white great-coat buttoned well up to his gay-coloured handkerchief, a flower of some sort decking his breast, a broad-brimmed beaver of white or grey, and a whip which looked as if it had just come from the maker's hands—indeed everything about him was polished, from the crown of his hat to his well-fitting boots; and I believe that no accident ever happened to the coach he drove. There was the Independent, also a first-rate coach, and, in those days, Collier's old coach, which carried six inside, in which we once made a journey—that is, Jack and I—with four old ladies who ate apples and drank gin with the windows up all the way, and talked learnedly of the babies they had assisted to bring into the world, utterly ignoring our presence.

The sky was bright, the air fresh, with just a touch of a frosty smell in it, and we were in exuberant spirits. We had our pea-shooters ready, and had long been on the watch for the lumbering old vehicle when we saw it approaching. Didn't we pepper the passengers, greatly to their indignation! We only wished that the four old professors of the obstetric art had been within, that we might have wreaked our vengeance on them. What damage we did we could not tell, for we were by them like a flash of lightning. We had numerous sympathisers among our companions on the top of the coach when we told them our tale of woe.

At Southampton we changed into a much slower coach, which, however, conveyed us safely through the forest to the neighbourhood of Lyndhurst, when, waiting in the road, we espied, to our intense delight, a pony-carriage driven by Sam Barnby, who held the office of extra coachman, gamekeeper, and fisherman, besides several other employments, in the establishment at Foxholme. With us he was a prodigious favourite, as he was with all the youngsters who went to the place; and Sir Hugh, I know, trusted him completely, and employed him in numerous little private services of beneficence and charity when a confidential agent was required. He was the invariable companion of all the youngsters in our boating, fishing, and shooting excursions.

It was dusk when we got into the carriage, and, as our way lay for some distance through the thickest part of the forest by a cross road which few people but Sam Barnby would have attempted to take at that late hour, we could often scarcely distinguish the track under the thick branches of the leafless trees which, stretching across it, formed a trellis-work over our heads, while the thick hollies and other evergreens formed an impenetrable wall on either side. Now and then, when the forest opened out and the forms of the trees were rather more clearly defined, they often assumed shapes so fantastic and strange that I could scarcely prevent a sort of awe creeping over me, and half expected that the monsters I fancied I saw would move from their places and grab up Jack, Sam Barnby, the carriage, and me, and bolt off with us into some recess of the forest. Jack was talking away to Sam. I had been up bolstering the night before, and had not slept a wink. Suddenly the carriage stopped, and I heard Sam and Jack utter an exclamation. I echoed it, and pretty loudly too; for I thought that one of the monsters I had been dreaming about had really got hold of us.

"Hillo! who have we got here?" exclaimed Sam. "Do you hold the reins, Master Jack, and I'll get out and see."

I was now fully awake. I asked Jack what it was.

"We nearly drove over somebody; but the pony shied, fortunately. There he is; I can just see him moving."

"Why, I do believe it's poor silly Dick Green!" exclaimed Sam. "Is it you, Dicky? Speak out, man! How came you here?"

"Yes, it be I," said the idiot. "Can't I sleep here? It's very comfortable—all clean and nice—no smoke, no noise."

"Why, you would be frozen to death, man, if you did," answered Sam. "But, I ask, what brought you here?"

"That's a secret I bean't a going to tell thee," whispered the idiot. "But just do thee stop here; thee'll foind it very pleasant."

"No, thank you; we'd rather not," said Sam. "But just do thee get into the carriage alongside Master William there, and we'll take thee to the Hall, and give thee some supper—that's what thee wants, lad."

"Well, now, that's kind like," simpered the idiot. "I know thee well, Sam Barnby; thee hadst always a good heart."

"Well, well, lad, don't stand talking there, but scramble in at once," cried Sam, as he forced the poor creature down by my side.

Soon afterwards we passed a woodman's or a keeper's hut, from the window of which a gleam of light streamed forth on the idiot's face, and a creeping feeling of fear stole over me as I caught his large lack-lustre eyes peering into mine, the teeth in his ever-grinning mouth looking white and shining under his upturned lip. I knew that he was said to be perfectly harmless and good natured, but I would have given anything if Jack would have changed places with me. I did not drop off to sleep again, that is very certain. The way seemed far longer than I had expected, and I almost fancied that Sam must have mistaken his road—not a very likely thing to occur, however.

As we neared the lodge gate of Foxholme, I shut my eyes, lest the light from the window should again show me the poor idiot's face staring at me. All disagreeable feelings, however, speedily vanished as we drove up in front of the chief entrance, and the hall-door was flung open, and a perfect blaze of light streamed forth, and the well-known smiling faces of Purkins, the butler, and James Jarvis, the footman, appeared; and the latter, descending the steps, carried up our trunk and hat-boxes and a play-box we had brought empty, though to go back in a very different condition, we had a notion. Then we ran into the drawing-room, and found our uncle Sir Hugh, and our kind, sweet-smiling aunt, and our favourite cousin Julia—she was Sir Hugh's only daughter by a first marriage—and our little cousin Hugh—his only son by the present Lady Worsley; and there, too, was cousin Peter. He was Sir Hugh's cousin and aunt Worsley's cousin, and was cousin to a great number of people besides—indeed everybody who came to the house called him cousin, it seemed. Some few, perhaps, at first formally addressed him as Mr. Peter, or Mr. Peter Langstone; but they soon got into the way of calling him Mr. Peter, or cousin Peter, or Peter alone. He wasn't old, and he couldn't have been very young. He wasn't good-looking, I fancy—not that we ever thought about the matter. He had a longish sallow face, and a big mouth with white teeth, and lips which twisted and curled about in a curious manner, and large soft grey eyes—not green-grey, but truly blue-grey—with almost a woman's softness in the recess, I suspect, of his heart; and yet I don't think that there were many more daring or cool and courageous men than cousin Peter. He had been in the navy in his youth, and had seen some pretty hard service, but had come on shore soon after he had received his promotion as lieutenant, and, for some reason or other, had never since been afloat. Sir Hugh was very much attached to him, and had great confidence in his judgment and rectitude; so that he tried to keep him at Foxholme as much as he could. He might have lived there and been welcome all the year round.

I have said nothing yet about cousin Julia. She was about twenty-two, but looked younger, except when she was about any serious matter. I thought her then the most lovely creature I had ever seen, and I was not far wrong. There was a sweet, gentle, and yet firm expression in her face, and a look—I cannot describe it—which would have prevented even the most impudent from talking nonsense or saying anything to offend her ear.

Our uncle, Sir Hugh, was tall and stout, with a commanding and

dignified manner. No one would have ventured to take liberties with him, though he was as kind and gentle as could be. He had been in the army when he was young, and seen service, but had given it up when he succeeded to Foxholme and the duties attached to its possession. "I should have been ill serving my country if I had remained abroad and left my tenants and poor neighbours to the care of agents and hirelings," I heard him once observe. He was very fond of the army, and it was a great trial to him to leave it.

Our aunt was a very pretty, lively, kind, amiable woman, and devotedly attached to our uncle. She was small, and slight, and young-looking, though I don't think that she was so very young after all.

Hugh was a regular fine little chap, manly, independent, and yet very amiable. He might have been rather spoilt, because it was a hard matter not to make a good deal of him. People couldn't help thinking of him as the long-wished-for heir of the old place and the old title, and what joy he had brought to Sir Hugh's heart, and what pride and satisfaction to that of his mother, and that he would some day be the master of Foxholme (all hoped that day might be far distant); and they prayed that he might worthily represent his honoured father.

After, all, however, there was no one we thought so much about as cousin Peter. How full of life and spirits and fun he was! A shade, however, of gravity or melancholy occasionally stole over him. He had an inner deeper life of which we boys knew nothing. We used to be surprised, after he had been playing all sorts of pranks with us, to see him go and sit down as grave as a judge alongside Sir Hugh, and talk as seriously as anybody else. Then he would jump up and say something quiet and confidential to some young lady, and crack a joke with some old one; and again he would be back among us, bating the bear, standing on his head, or doing some other wonderful out-of-the-way thing. I remember that even then I more than once remarked that whenever he drew near our cousin Julia there was a greater sobriety and a wonderful gentleness and tenderness in his manner; and often, when she was not looking and he thought no one else was looking, his eyes were turned towards her with a look which older people would easily have interpreted. I thought myself, "He must be very fond of her, but that is but natural—everybody is."

CHAPTER II.

I SHOULD like to give a full description of the events of those never-to-be-forgotten Christmas holidays. Besides ourselves, we had two cousins and the sons of some of Sir Hugh's friends, and no end of grown-up guests, young ladies and their mammas and papas, and several gentlemen who were in no ways stiff or distant, and we didn't mind saying what we liked to them. I remember that Christmas-day—how happily it began—how, on a fine frosty morning, we all walked to the village church—how we found it decked with hollies, reminding us that, even in mid-winter, our merciful God never withdraws his blessings from the earth—how we could not help listening with attention to the sermon of the good vicar, who reminded us that we were assembled to commemorate the greatest event that has oc-

curred since the creation of the world. He reminded us that the Christ who was on that day born into the world, a weak helpless infant, prepared to endure a life of toil, of poverty, and of suffering, and at the same time of active unwearied usefulness, was our Lord the Son of God himself, that he took our sins upon him, shed his blood on the cross, suffering agony and shame which we had merited, that he might wash our sins away; died and was buried, that he might, though sinless himself, for our sakes endure the loss sin brought on mankind, and thus accomplish the whole of the work he had undertaken to fulfil—how he rose again, ascending into heaven triumphant over death, that he might then, having lived and suffered as a man on earth, feeling for our infirmities, plead effectual for us — that he had suffered the punishment due to us, before the throne of the Almighty, an offended but a just and merciful God, full of love to mankind. I never before understood so clearly that the whole work of redemption is complete—that Christ has suffered for us, and that, therefore, no more suffering is required. All we have to do is to take advantage of what He has done, and put our whole faith and trust in him. The vicar then described most beautifully to us how Christ lived on earth, and that he did so that he might set us an example, which we are bound in ordinary love and gratitude to imitate, by showing good will, love, kindness, charity in thought, word, and deed towards our fellow-men. How beautiful and glorious sounded that Christmas hymn, sung not only by all the school-children, but by all the congregation, Sir Hugh's rich voice, old as he was, sounding clearly among the basses of the others. He did his best, and he knew and felt that his voice was not more acceptable at the throne of Heaven than that of the youngest child present. Then, when service was over, Sir Hugh came out arm in arm with our aunt, followed by Julia and little Hugh, and talked so friendly and kindly to all the people, and they all smiled and looked so pleased and replied to him in a way which showed that they were not a bit afraid of him, but knew that he loved them and was interested in their welfare; and Lady Worsley and cousin Julia talked in the same kind way, and knew everybody and how many children there were in each family, and asked after those who were absent—some at service, and some apprentices, and some in the army or at sea. Master Peter also went about among them all, and seemed so glad to see them, and shook hands with the old men, and joked in his quiet way with the old women. He contrived to have a word with everybody as he moved in and out among them. Then the vicar came out, and a few friendly loving words were exchanged with him too.

"We shall see you and Miss Becky at dinner as usual, Mr. Upton," said Sir Hugh, as they parted.

"I should be sorry to be absent, Sir Hugh. On twenty-nine Christmas-days have we taken our dinner with you, and this will make the thirtieth, if I mistake not," answered the vicar.

"Ah, time flies along, and yet Miss Becky does not, at all events, remind us of it," said Sir Hugh. Whereat Miss Becky, who was very fair and somewhat fat, laughed and shook hands heartily with Sir Hugh and Lady Worsley, and smiled affectionately at Julia and

little Hugh, and we commenced our homeward walk. How enjoyable it was—how pleasant was our light luncheon, for we dined at five, that we might have a long evening. We all looked forward to the evening with great delight. Scarcely was dinner over than a sound was heard—a bell in the hall striking sweetly. We all jumped up, led by Master Peter, and arranging ourselves, some on the great oak staircase and others in a circle at its foot, we stood listening to the Christmas chimes and other tunes struck up by a dozen or more men with different toned bells—one in each hand. Scarcely had they ceased and received their accustomed largesse from Sir Hugh's liberal hands, than some young voices were heard coming up the avenue. They, as were the rest, were admitted at a side-door, through the servants' hall, where tea, and ale, and bread and cheese, and cakes, and other good things were ready to regale them. The young singers came trooping into the hall, one pushing the other forward; shy and diffident, though they well knew that they had no reason to fear the lord of that mansion nor any one present. At length they arranged themselves, and the leader of the band beginning, they all chimed in, and sang, if not in a way to suit a fastidious taste, at all events, with feeling and enthusiasm, a beautiful Christmas carol. The words are simple, but often as I have heard them I have never failed to feel my heart lifted up to that just and merciful God who formed and carried out that great and glorious work, the scheme of the redemption, thus wonderfully reconciling the demands of justice with love and mercy towards the fallen race of man. Surely this is a theme on which angels must delight to dwell, and to which they must ever with joy attune their voices and their harps; so I used to think then and so I think now, and hope to think till I reach the not unwelcome grave, and find it a happy reality. Several hymns and other appropriate songs were sung by the children, and then the leader began to sidle towards the door, while the rest nudged and elbowed each other, and at length they all shuffled demurely out again, but not a minute had passed before they were all heard shouting and laughing right merrily in the servants' hall. Their places were quickly supplied by a very different set of characters. They were dressed with cocked-hats, and swords, and uniforms of generals, and princes, which, though highly picturesque, were not of a very martial character, or calculated to stand much wear and tear, being chiefly adorned with coloured paper and tinsel. The tones of their voices showed that, notwithstanding the lofty-sounding names they assumed, they were not of an aristocratic rank, nor, though they all spoke in poetry, was that of a very high order. There was Julius Cæsar, and Mark Antony, and Caractacus, and the Black Prince, and King Arthur, and Richard III., the Emperor Alexander, Marshal Blucher, and several other heroes, ancient and modern, including Napoleon Bonaparte and the Duke of Wellington. Some were tall, and some were short, and some fat, and others thin, and I had, even then, strong doubts whether they bore any similarity to the heroes they represented as to figure, while, certainly, they were not in any way particular as to correctness of costume. One little chap, who was evidently looked upon as a star, came forward and announced that he was Julius Cæsar, and a short time afterwards he informed us that he was

Marshal Blucher. Having marched round the hall in a very amicable way, they ranged themselves in two parties opposite each other. One hero on one side defying another on the other, they rushed forward and commenced in the ancient Greek and Trojan fashion a furious verbal combat, always in verse, the last lines in one case being:

> I tell thee that thou art but a trait'rous cheat,
> So fight away, or I will make thee into mincemeat.

They were not in the least particular as to who should fight one with the other. Julius Cæsar and the Black Prince had a desperate combat, and so had Mark Antony and King Arthur, the two British heroes coming off victorious, and leaving their opponents dead on the field. The most terrific combat was that between the Duke of Wellington and Napoleon Bonaparte. For fully five minutes they walked about abusing each other in the most unmeasured versification—I was going to say language—flourishing their swords, and stamping their feet. They put me much in mind of two turkey-cocks preparing for a fight. It might be remarked also that in this, as in the previous instances, the modesty of the heroes did not stand in their way, when singing their own praises:

> I am that hero, great and good,
> Whom France and Frenchmen long withstood.
> I beat them all well out of Spain,
> And I will beat them all again.
> And Bony, as you know 'tis true,
> I thrashed thee well at Waterloo;
> So if you have not had enough,
> All will allow you're very tough.
> Come on, I say, I do not mind thee,
> For as I was, you still will find me.

Thus spoke the great Duke of Wellington. Bony answered in a similar, only in a somewhat more abusive, strain, when, throwing the sheaths of their swords on the floor, they commenced a furious and deady combat. At length Napoleon was slain; but, somewhat outraging our school notions of history, Julius Cæsar rushed forward to avenge his death. He, however, got more than he expected, and was soon laid alongside Bony. One hero after another rushed forward, but all were finally slain, and the Iron Duke remained master of the field. He, however, overcome by fatigue and numberless wounds, sank down at last, and died also. Now a new character appeared at the door, in the person of a doctor, with a long nose and a stick, which he held constantly to it. Having explained who he was and what he would do, or rather what very few things he couldn't do, he produced a huge snuff-box from his pocket, and first approached the slain hero of Waterloo, saying,

> "Take some of my sniff-snuff,
> Up thy riff-ruff,
> And rise up, brave Duke of Wellington."

Up jumped the Duke with wonderful agility, and began dancing about right merrily. The same words produced a similar effect on all the late combatants, and, the doctor helping them up, they were all

soon dancing and jumping about as merrily as the Duke. This amusement was of short duration, and a moral was taught us as to the brevity of all worldly happiness, for suddenly, the door bursting open, in rushed a huge figure like a moving holly-bush, but it had a head and arms and legs. It was of an allegorical character, intended to represent Time; but, instead of a scythe, the arms held a broom, by lustily plying which, he speedily swept all the heroes and the great doctor off the stage. These mummers as they are called in that part of the country always used to excite my warmest admiration. We used to call them jiggery-mummers at Foxholme, because they danced or jigged in the peculiar fashion I have described. They are a remnant of the morris-dancers of olden days. They were generally called on to repeat this play in the servants' hall, and often in my younger days did I steal down to witness the exhibition. This closed the public amusements of the evening. The evening of that holy day at Foxholme was always spent in a quiet though in a cheerful way. Sir Hugh would have preferred having the mummers perform on another day, but the custom was so ancient, and the people were so opposed to the notion of a change, that he permitted it to exist till he could induce them to choose of their own accord another day. We spent a very pleasant, happy evening, and we knew that for the next day Master Peter had prepared all sorts of games for our amusement. Little Hugh had been with his mother watching the mummers, and highly amused, giving way to shouts of hearty laughter. Then he ran off to Julia, while Lady Worsley was attending to some of her guests; then he attached himself for a time to Master Peter, and from him made his escape into the servants' hall to witness the mummers' second representation. I remember that Jack and I, with several other boys, went out before returning into the drawing-room to smell the air and to discover if there was a frost. How pure and fresh and keen it was. The gravel on the walk felt crisp as we trod on it. The stars in countless numbers shone with an extraordinary brilliancy from the dark cloudless sky. There was no doubt about a frost, and a pretty sharp one too, and our hopes rose of getting sliding, skating, and snowballing to our hearts' content. While we were standing with our faces turned towards the park, I remember that Jack, who had a sharp pair of eyes, said that he saw a deer running across it. We declared that it must have been fancy, as it was difficult to make out an object through the darkness, except it was against the sky, at a distance even of twenty yards. As we had run out without our hats, we very quickly returned into the warm house.

CHAPTER III.

We were sitting round Master Peter, listening to an account he was giving us of a trip he once made, when a midshipman, through Palestine, when the drawing-room door opened, and Mrs. Moss, little Hugh's nurse, appeared, to beg that he might be sent up to bed. There was nothing unusual for Nurse Moss coming for Master Hugh, who always objected to be sent off to bed, but I saw Lady Worsley turn suddenly pale.

"Why, nurse, I thought that he had gone to you nearly half an

hour ago," she exclaimed. "He has not come into the drawing-room since the mummers were here. Oh! where can he be?"

"Probably coiled up in an arm-chair in the other drawing-room, or in the study," said Sir Hugh, calmly, seeing our aunt's agitation; but I thought that even his eye looked anxious. The next moment everybody was hunting about in every possible direction. The child was not in the north drawing-room, nor in the ante-room, nor in the study. That was soon made clear. Where was he, though? Some of the party went down-stairs, to help the servants look in that part of the house; others searched through the bedrooms. Every cupboard, every chest and box, was opened. We looked under every arm-chair, and bed, and sofa in the house. We boys were, I must say, the most active in our movements, and it was a mercy that we did not set the house on fire. We looked into every attic—those inhabited and those full of lumber. In the latter I should not have been quite happy alone. They were full of so many strange articles of furniture and ornaments, or what were once considered such, and pictures in corners, with eyes, as the light of our candles fell on them, staring out so curiously, that I could not help fancying that some person had got in there to frighten us. Frequently the cry was echoed through the house, "Is he found? Is he found?" with a reply in the negative. Sir Hugh headed one party, Lady Worsley another, cousin Peter a third, and Julia a fourth. After a most systematic search not a trace of the lost child could be discovered. Matters had now become very painful. Our aunt was almost overpowered with her feelings of anxiety, and Julia was nearly as much agitated. Sir Hugh next summoned the servants, as well as all the family, into the hall, and questioned every one to discover by whom his son had last been seen. Several of the servants acknowledged to have observed him enter the servants' hall, but no one could say positively that he had gone out again. No further information could be elicited from any one. The matter had become truly alarming and mysterious. While the female part of the household continued the search within the house, we, with all the lanterns which could be mustered, and extemporary torches, began a search outside. The ringers, and the singers, and the mummers had taken their departure. Messengers were therefore sent after them to the village, to call them back, that they might be questioned. The child would scarcely have left the house of his own accord, and yet, if not, who would have ventured to carry him away? What temptation, indeed, would there have been for any one to do so? That was the question. I had never seen cousin Peter in such a state of agitation as he now was, though he tried to be calm and composed. Round and round the house we went, and looked under every tree and bush, and into every dark corner. At last the mummers and the singers and ringers began to come up from the village, accompanied by the greater part of the population of the place, all anxious to know what had happened. A variety of rumours were afloat. Everybody sympathised with our uncle. As soon as they were assembled he addressed them, and then begged those who had anything to say to step forward that he might hear them one by one. Not a word of information, however, was elicited of any value. They had seen little Hugh in the servants'

hall, and on one occasion he had darted forward and run in and out among the mummers; but they thought that he had gone back again among the servants. Hopes had been entertained that he, for a freak, had run off with the mummers or singers; but they all positively asserted that he was not with them when they left the hall. Inquiries were made whether any suspicious characters had been seen in the neighbourhood. The people talked for some time among themselves. Then John Hodson, the village blacksmith, stepped forward, and said that two days before a stranger had spoken to him as he was working in his smithy, and asked a number of questions about the place; but he didn't mind them at the time, and thought that it was only for curiosity's sake. The cobbler, Ebenezer Patch, then recollected that a stranger had spoken to him, but he didn't heed much at the time what questions were asked or what were answered.

"What was he like, Patch?" asked Sir Hugh, in a hoarse voice, which sounded strange to my ears.

"Why, Sir Hugh, he had, I marked, a very white, long face, and he had an odd bend in his back, which made him look somewhat short. He spoke gently, I mind, just like a gentleman, and made no doubt that he was one," answered the cobbler.

The blacksmith gave the same account of the stranger. It seemed to agitate our uncle strangely, so it did cousin Peter. They talked aside for some time.

"Can that wretched man have had anything to do with it?" I heard Sir Hugh say.

"Too probably, indeed, should he really have been in the neighbourhood. I fear so," remarked cousin Peter. "At all events, we must endeavour to discover where he has gone. He is capable of any daring deed of wickedness. My only hope is that we are mistaken in supposing that the person seen was he."

"The description suits him too closely to leave any doubt on my mind."

I did not hear more, and I had no idea who the person was of whom they were speaking, except that he was the stranger seen in the village; nor could I tell why they should fancy he had had anything to do with the disappearance of little Hugh.

After a further consultation, cousin Peter and two other gentlemen went to their rooms, and returned booted and spurred, and, putting on their great-coats, accompanied by Sam Barnby, rode off in two parties in different directions. Notwithstanding this, another search, intended to be still more rigid than the first, was instituted, both inside and outside the house. Meantime, Sir Hugh had ordered lights into the library, and spent the night writing letters to magistrates and others, and papers of all sorts for printing, offering rewards for the recovery of the lost child. Lady Worsley was for most of the time in the drawing-room with Julia and several other ladies, who were in vain attempting to comfort her. No one went to bed that night at Foxholme Hall. We boys were called in by Sir Hugh, and highly proud at being employed by him in copying notices to be sent out in the morning, offering a reward for the discovery of little Hugh. We were very sorry for the loss of our small cousin; but we liked the excitement amazingly. For my part, I must own

that I could not, however, altogether forget the games cousin Peter had prepared for us, and the amusement we had anticipated, and regret for the fun and frolic we should miss mingled somewhat with the sorrow I really felt for the loss of little Hugh, and the trouble which had come on our uncle and aunt and all the family.

CHAPTER IV.

Morning came at last, and as the family assembled in the breakfast-room with pale anxious faces, the question again and again was asked if any trace had been found of little Hugh. Cousin Peter and the other gentlemen and Sam Barnby came back; but they did not appear to have anything satisfactory to communicate. Poor cousin Peter, I never saw his face look so long and miserable. I thought the anxiety would kill him. He seemed to feel the event even more than Sir Hugh, who more than once murmured, "God's will be done, whatever has happened to the child." It must be a great thing to be able to say that under all the trials of life. With daylight the search through the park and grounds was recommenced. I know that I cried outright when I saw men with nets dragging the ponds. I had not realised the possibility that the dear little fellow might actually be dead, as this proceeding suggested. I was very thankful each time that I saw the drags come up empty. As I remarked, the ground had become so hard early in the evening that no footprints could have been made on it. This circumstance made it impossible to discover the direction little Hugh could have taken, had he gone off by himself, which it was utterly improbable he should have done, or that of anybody else.

Several gentlemen, county magistrates, and lawyers, and constables, came during the day to see Sir Hugh, some to offer him advice and assistance, others to receive his directions. He and cousin Peter seemed at last to have made up their minds that little Hugh had been carried off by the mysterious individual who had been seen by the blacksmith and cobbler; but how he had contrived to get into the house no one could tell. The mummers indignantly denied that any stranger could have come in with them, while the servants as positively asserted that no one whom they did not know had entered the house that evening. Another guest had been expected in the afternoon, a Mr. Strafford. I had remarked that whenever his name was mentioned, cousin Julia had looked very interested, and once or twice I saw a blush rising on her cheek. He had been there before, and Sir Hugh spoke highly of him. Julia had met him at a house where she had been staying in the summer. Cousin Peter, on the contrary, looked sad and pained, I fancied, whenever he was spoken of; and putting that and other things together, I had little doubt that Mr. Strafford was a suitor for cousin Julia's hand. I was therefore curious to know what sort of a person Mr. Strafford was. Both Sir Hugh and Julia expressed themselves anxious for his arrival, under the belief that he would materially assist in discovering what had become of little Hugh. Why I could not tell, except that he was a barrister, and that barristers were supposed to be very clever fellows,

who can always find out everything. It was too late in the afternoon, growing dusk, when a post-chaise drove up to the door, and a slight, active, very intelligent, and good-looking young man got out of it. I was in a low window in the ante-room reading, hidden by the back of a large arm-chair. I looked out of the window and saw the new arrival, who the next instant was in the room, when Julia went out to meet him. From the way they greeted each other, I had no longer any doubt of the true state of the case. They of course did not see me, or they might not have been so demonstrative. Mr. Strafford listened with knitted brow to the account Julia gave him of little Hugh's disappearance, or rather I may say of his abduction, for she had no doubt of his having been carried off by the mysterious stranger.

"It is a sad alternative, for the sake of the family; but I see no other course to pursue," said Mr. Strafford. "The unhappy man must be captured at all hazards. If we attempt to make any private compromise, he will escape, and too probably never allow us to hear more of your brother. For his own sake, I do not think that he will have ventured to be guilty of violence."

"Oh the disgrace, the disgrace to the family," cried Julia. "Yet he cannot be so cruel, so ungrateful, so wicked as to venture to hurt poor dear little Hugh."

"On that score set your mind at rest," answered Mr. Strafford. "He will try to escape with him, I suspect, to the coast of France, and his plan will be take to him to some distant place where he thinks we shall not discover him. I have no doubt that your father and cousin have already taken measures to stop him. At all events, we will see about it at once, as there is no time to lose." Mr. Strafford now went on into the drawing-room, where Sir Hugh and Lady Worsley were waiting to see him. From what I had heard, I now began to suspect who the mysterious stranger was. I hurried off to consult with Jack on the subject. He agreed with me that he must be a cousin of Sir Hugh's, who, being his nearest kinsman of the male branch of the family, would succeed to the title and estates should he die without a son. This man, Everard Worsley, was always a wild profligate character, and was at present outlawed, so that he could not venture to show his face openly in England. Of course it would be a great thing for him to get the heir out of the way, as should no other son be born to Sir Hugh, he would probably be able to have the statute of outlawry removed (I think that is the proper term), and come and take possession, and turn Lady Worsley and cousin Julia out of the house, and send all the old servants about their business, and fill the place with his own abandoned reprobate companions and hangers-on. This was a possibility, I had heard it whispered, might occur. It was the skeleton in the family cupboard; it was the not improbable event of all others to be dreaded and deplored. I had heard, too, that this disreputable kinsman was nearly related to cousin Peter, and that cousin Peter had an unbounded abhorrence for him, that is to say, as much as he could have for any human being. I fancied that cousin Peter himself was in the line of succession, though I did not know exactly where; but I was very certain that

nothing would have caused him more acute sorrow than to see those he loved so well removed to make way for him.

I observed that cousin Peter met Mr. Strafford in the most frank and cordial manner, and at once entered with him into a discussion as to the steps which should next be taken for the recovery of the child. I did not hear all that was to be done. I knew, however, that a number of the most intelligent and trustworthy men in the neighbourhood were engaged. Some were sent off to all the places on the coast whence boats could get off, to ascertain if any had gone across the Channel, and to examine any which might be going, while other parties were, as soon as it was daylight, to scour the forest in every direction. We boys, under Sam Barnby, were, much to our satisfaction, to engage in this latter service. Sir Hugh and the rest of the family, overcome with fatigue, were compelled to go to bed; but all night long people were coming and going with messages, showing that a very vigilant and active search was being carried on. Neither cousin Peter nor Mr. Strafford, however, went to bed, as they had taken upon themselves the direction of the search. Indeed, unless Everard Worsley had succeeded at once in getting away from the neighbourhood, it seemed scarcely possible that he should now be able to make his escape.

CHAPTER V.

Long before daybreak we boys were up, called by Sam Barnby, and, having breakfasted and, by his advice, filled our pockets with bread and ham and tongue and brawn, set off while the first streaks of dawn were still in the sky to commence our search through the forest. The sky was cloudless, the stars shining brightly at first, but one by one they disappeared as the light streaming through the leafless trees on the one hand seemed to be rolling back the gloom of night on the other. The air was pure but keen as razor-blades, as Sam observed, and would have saved us shaving, if we had had beards to shave. The crisply frozen grass crackled under our feet as we trod rapidly over it, with difficulty restraining our inclination to sing and shout out, so high were our spirits raised by the exhilarating atmosphere.

We walked on rapidly, covering, by Sam Barnby's directions, as much ground as possible, while, however, keeping each other in sight, which could be more easily done at that time of the year than in the summer. Every now and then we came on a herd of forest ponies, which went scampering away, shaking the hoar-frost from the bushes as their shaggy coats brushed them in passing. Less frequently we encountered herds of the fallow deer, once so numerous. They would stand for an instant gazing at us, as if wondering why we had invaded their domains, and then, fleet as the wind, they would fly, following one after the other, till they reached some knoll or thicker wood, where they would stop and scrutinise us as we passed. We were all soon in a thorough glow from the exercise we were taking, for the ground was far from level. Now we had to ascend a height, now descend into a valley, circuit a marsh, or leap across a stream—a feat not always easily accomplished.

We passed many spots of historic fame which I cannot here stop to describe. Many were highly picturesque and beautiful, and had attracted, I doubt not, the pencil of Gilpin, who ministered to a parish not far off. On we went, hour after hour, unflaggingly, till Sam called a halt, and each of us produced the provender we had brought. Sam had strapped a large fishing-basket to his back, and, to our infinite satisfaction, when we found that our own supplies were totally inadequate to satisfy the cravings of our keen appetites, he brought forth an abundant supply of eatables and a bottle or two of the stoutest of stout ales, that, as he remarked, a little might go a long way. There must have been real stuff in it, for, though he gave us each but a few thimblefuls, it set us up amazingly, and away we went as full of spirit and strength as when we first started.

I cannot describe all the adventures we met with. Jack was on the right of the line, I was next to him. Suddenly I heard him cry out. I ran up to him, calling to the others to halt. Jack pointed to an object under a bush. It was the body of a man.

"Is he asleep?" I asked.

"He is very quiet," said Jack.

Indeed he was quiet. All our shouting did not arouse him. He was dressed in a smock-frock and long brown gaiters; but his hands were white, and his face fair.

"He is dead, young gentlemen!" said Sam Barnby, gravely, when he came up. "Who can he be?"

We all stood aloof. None of us had ever seen a dead man. It was a sad object. Sam, stooping down, examined the body.

"To my mind, this is no other than the unfortunate gentleman we are looking for. He is no carter, and under his smock his dress is that of a gentleman."

This was indeed valuable information to carry home. Sam wanted us to help him remove the body, but we had no fancy to do that. What, however, had become of little Hugh? If the miserable man had really carried him off, where had he bestowed him? Could he have murdered the child first, and then destroyed himself? The thought was too dreadful to be entertained. How had he met with his death? That was another question. Again Sam examined the body.

"This tells a tale, at all events," he exclaimed, holding up a little shoe.

It was evidently Hugh's. This man had carried him off—of that there was no longer a shadow of doubt. What had become of him, though? We searched round and round the spot, under every bush, and in the hollow of every tree. Not a further sign of the child could we discover. There would be still daylight sufficient for us to go to the Hall with the information and to return. The question was who should go and who should stay by the dead body, which we considered that we ought not to leave. Without Sam we could not find our way, so it was necessary that he should go, at all events. At last my brother Jack asked me if I would remain with him. I own that I did not like it. There was something terrible at the thought of being out alone with the dead body of our wicked kinsman, as we supposed

the man to be. Yet I did not wish to exhibit my fear, and put as bold a face on the matter as I could.

"Yes, of course, if you wish it, Jack, I'll stay with you," I answered at once. "Somebody must stay, and I suppose that we are the right people to do so. We can run about to keep ourselves warm. I shan't, of course, mind it a bit, if you don't. You'll not be long gone, will you, Sam?"

"Oh, no fear, Master William," answered Sam Barnby; "we'll be at the Hall and back in no time. We've come a long round to get here."

This answer encouraged me a little, and I managed, I flatter myself, to look thoroughly unconcerned. We had each of us thick sticks: not that there was anything to fight with; for even wild pigs don't attack people who let them alone; but I know that I clutched mine very tightly as the rest of the party disappeared among the trees of the forest and Jack and I were left on guard. As to looking on the dead man, that was more than I dared do; so I walked about flourishing my stick and talking to Jack as far as I could get from the spot where the dead man lay consistently with my undertaking to keep guard over it. Jack did not seem to care very much about the matter. Now he walked close up to the spot, then he joined me and talked on indifferent subjects, though I don't think that even he cared to look directly at the dead man. We began at last to become very tired of our guard, and to wish that our friends would return and relieve us. I had no watch. Jack had forgotten to wind up his, so we could not tell how time sped.

Not far off was a dark clump of hollies, to which I had extended my walk. As I was turning round, I heard a slight rustling of the leaves, and, to my inexpressible horror, I caught a glimpse of a pair of eyes gleaming out at me through an opening in the boughs. I instantly connected them somehow with the man supposed to be dead, and, when I hurried back to Jack, I half expected to find that the body had got up, and, by some means or other, gone round into the holly-bush. No; there it lay, quiet enough, never more to move of its own accord. But to what could those eyes belong?

"Jack! Jack!" I stammered out, feeling that I must look very pale and frightened, "I have seen a pair of eyes!"

"Whereabouts?" asked Jack. "I suppose that they are in somebody's head, then?"

"That's the question," said I; "I am not quite so sure of it."

"Oh, nonsense!" cried Jack; "let's have a look at the place. Where did you see them?"

I pointed to the spot, and plucking up courage as he walked up to it, followed him, clutching my stick tightly. The holly-bushes formed a tolerably large screen, so that we should have to make a wide circuit to get to the rear. Nothing was to be seen in front. No eyes were visible where I had caught the glimpse of them. Jack said it was fancy, but still he had an inclination to examine further. I would rather have waited till the arrival of our friends, but he, telling me to go round one end, ran round the other, that we might catch anybody who might be there. I didn't like it, but still I went, feeling that I

was performing a deed of mighty heroism. I was resolved not to allow Jack to call me a coward; indeed, he very seldom did so, because anything that he dared do I did; the only difference was that he liked it, and I didn't. I got round therefore as fast as he did, and just behind the spot where I had seen the eyes, there they were again, but this time I discerned a head and face into which they were fixed—a face I had seen before.

"There, there!" I cried, pointing to the face as Jack came up.

It was that of the poor idiot lad, Dicky Green. He was crouching down, evidently trying to conceal himself from us.

"Why, Dicky, what are you doing here?" cried Jack. "We won't hurt you."

"I was a looking to see what'd happen next. He's a sleeping, bean't he?" answered the idiot, pointing in the direction of the dead man.

"It's a sleep from which he will never awake, lad," said Jack. "He is dead, lad."

"Lor', be he? Then you won't go for to tell of I?" exclaimed Dicky, whimpering. "Mother sent I to look for the little one's shoe, when I told her how I'd got hold of him and gi'en the man as was a trying to take him from me a pretty hard clout on the head. I thought I'd made him quiet, but I ne'er meaned to kill him, that I didn't."

"The little one!" crid Jack, a new light bursting on us. "What do you know of him? Where is he?"

"Oh, he's all right, and happy as he can be, I wot," said Dicky, with a grin, which made us doubt the truth of his assertions.

Our fear now, however, was that the idiot would escape from us before we could ascertain whether or not he really did know where little Hugh was. Still, we could not help hoping that the child was safe. Jack therefore did his best to keep him talking till our friends should come from the Hall. Happily, the poor creature was very fond of keeping his tongue moving, as other people with a limited supply of brains are apt to do. Though he talked on, we could not make out more than we had already. To our great relief, we heard at length the sound of voices approaching us. Soon Sir Hugh, with cousin Peter, Mr. Strafford, and several other gentlemen on horseback, with Sam Barnby and a whole posse of men, appeared in the distance. We shouted to them to come to us. No sooner did Dicky Green see them, than he began to tremble violently; then, looking to the right and left, he bolted off through the forest. Fortunately, cousin Peter saw him, and gave chase on horseback; Sam Barnby also, followed in the direction we pointed. Still Dicky ran very fast, dodging in and out among the trees. Meantime, Sir Hugh and Mr. Strafford rode up to where the dead body lay on the grass. As soon as Sir Hugh saw the features of the corpse, he said in a sad voice,

"It is that unhappy man, cut off in the midst of his criminal career; but my boy, my boy, where can he be?"

Though Dicky Green ran fast, he was ere long overtaken and brought back. He stood before the gentlemen with one of his most idiotic looks, which made it seem hopeless that anything could be got out of him.

"Come, come, Dicky, that will not do for us," said cousin Peter "rouse yourself up, and tell us all you know about this matter. No one will do you any harm, lad."

Thus spoken to kindly, after some time, Dicky looked up and said:

"Thee wants to know about the little chap, and if I tells thee, thee won't ask how that out there came by his death?"

"If we do ask, it will not be to bring any harm on you, Dicky. You may be assured of that," said cousin Peter.

Dicky thought for some time, and then began to move off through the forest.

He is going towards his mother's cottage; I shouldn't be surprised if little Master Hugh was there safe enough," whispered Sam Barnby.

"Bless you, bless you, Sam Barnby, for those words, and I believe that they are true," exclaimed Sir Hugh, as we all followed the idiot, except a couple of men, who were left with the dead body.

In a short time we reached a wretched tumble-down hut of mud, with a roof of thatch, green with age, and full of holes, in which birds had built their nests. There at one end we found a bedridden old woman, the idiot's mother, and on a little pallet-bed in the further corner lay a blooming child fast asleep. Sir Hugh stepped forward, signing to us not to make a noise, and lifting the child in his arms, bestowed a kiss on its brow. The boy awoke, and seeing his father —for it was our dear little Hugh—threw his arms round his neck and exclaimed,

"You've come, papa, for Hugh at last; Hugh is so glad so happy!"

It was a happy meeting we all had at the Hall that evening, and grateful were the hearts of Sir Hugh and Lady Worsley at the recovery of their darling boy. I remember that afterwards there was an inquest, and that the magistrates met; but, except from the ravings of poor Dicky Green, there was no evidence how the deceased gentleman who was found in the forest came by his death. He was accordingly buried quietly in the parish churchyard, and as little fuss as possible made about the matter, though of course it had the usual run of a nine days' wonder. I am happy to say that little Hugh grew up, and as he is the father of a number of boys, there is not much chance of the property going out of the old line for want of a male heir.